By Thomas Maurice.

With the Authors respe

Offered to the Indian Institute in Oxford, November 5, 1913: Edward S. Dodgson.

BRAHMINICAL FRAUD DETECTED.

BRAHMINICAL FRAUD
DETECTED;

OR THE

ATTEMPTS OF THE SACERDOTAL TRIBE OF INDIA

TO INVEST THEIR

FABULOUS DEITIES AND HEROES WITH THE HONOURS AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSIAH,

EXAMINED, EXPOSED, AND DEFEATED.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE EPISCOPAL BENCH.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF INDIAN ANTIQUITIES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY W. BULMER AND CO. CLEVELAND-ROW, ST. JAMES'S;

AND SOLD BY WHITE, COCHRANE AND CO. FLEET-STREET.

1812.

PREFACE.

THE blasphemous parallel attempted to be run by M. Volney, and other Infidels, between CHRIST and CRISHNA, not only in name, but in the life and pretended miracles of the latter, is well known, and has been in part refuted. In a volume of the ASIATIC RESEARCHES, recently arrived in Europe, a second pretender to the honours and distinction of the Christian Messiah has made his appearance; and, of SALIVAHANA, or SALBAHAN, who gave his name to the GREAT ÆRA at present in use in India, it is expressly affirmed in Sanscrit books—"*that he was born of a* VIRGIN, *his nominal father of the* CARPENTER TRIBE; *that it was prophesied of him that he should thus be born; and that his life*

not only a satisfactory solution of the great question more immediately under examination, respecting those pseudo-deities, but a general refutation of the principal objections urged by the Indian sceptic in theological matters.

The wide circulation of M. Dupuis's learned, but pernicious, work on the Signs of the Zodiac, intended to tear up Christianity by the roots, and the numerous editions through which the "RUINS" of M. Volney, and other similar productions have run —productions founded principally on Indian astronomical calculations, as presumptuous as they are baseless, render that retrospect incumbent on those who have duly weighed the subject, and know the absolute fallacy of those exaggerated calculations.

On a subject less vitally important than the present to the interests of Christianity, in particular to that pure, animated, sublime form of it which distinguishes the Established Church of these realms, and

admits of *one only incarnate Redeemer*, it might appear presumptuous to have addressed this Dissertation, in the form of Letters, to the enlightened and dignified Order of individuals whose attention they solicit. As the Guardians, however, of that Church, whose very foundations these nefarious attempts to introduce a second incarnate Saviour among the fallen race of men directly tend to undermine, it is hoped they will be received with complacency from no young labourer in the vineyard over which they preside. I rely with confidence, therefore, on their candid perusal of a production which has cost no small portion of laborious research, on points where failure of proof would inevitably expose me to the irony and reproach of a host of enemies, who are known to pursue me and my writings with bitter and inextinguishable rancour. It is certainly the last work in prose with which I shall ever presume to trouble the public; and I hope it may prove somewhat of

a passport to the last work* which I shall ever publish in *poetry;* inscribed to the Earl of Carysfort, himself a bard of no inferior fame, and honoured through his kind recommendation, with the sanction of many individuals of that illustrious family, long distinguished (as the GRENVILLE HOMER can attest) both as the Ornaments, and the Patrons of Literature!

* See the Advertisement at the end of this pamphlet.

N. B. A few copies of the ORIENTAL TRINITIES yet remain, for sale, at No. 63, Fleet-street.

ADDENDUM TO PREFACE.

SINCE the sheets of this work have been printed off, a friend, to whose inspection they have been privately submitted, has suggested a hint too important to be passed over unnoticed, although the introduction of it in this place may be somewhat *informal*. It is to the following effect:

He observes, that if the hypothesis which I have, throughout these pages laboured (I trust, not ineffectually,) to establish, be founded in fact, viz. that the Indians borrowed the idea of their *incarnate deities being the offspring of virgins*—for from what source, except Revelation, *could* such a doctrine have emanated?—from the well known prediction relative to the birth of the Messiah, in Isaiah vii. 14, propagated by the Jews, through Asia, during the

wide and various dispersion of that migratory race, it forms a new, a striking, and, indeed, an irrefragable proof, in what sense the *ancient* Hebrews understood the word עלמה, ALMAH, which the generality of their *modern* commentators, in their avowed hostility to Christianity, deny properly to signify *a virgin*. This circumstance, corroborated by the arguments adduced by the immortal Kidder, in the fifth chapter of the second part of his "Demonstration of the Messiah," and by the known signification of old assigned to that word by the Seventy, seems to put the disputed matter for ever at rest.

LETTERS
TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
THE EPISCOPAL BENCH.

LETTER I.

MY LORDS,

WHILE some of your Lordships, with becoming attention to the sacred duties of your high station, are employed in refuting the erroneous doctrines inculcated by the bigoted admirers of Calvin, and others in combating the dreadful Arian and Socinian heresies, a blow has been aimed, or rather has been long aiming, at the very vitals of Christianity, in a quarter whence it has been *presumed* no small corroboration of its momentous truths had been of recent periods obtained.

THAT quarter is HINDOSTAN, among whose fabled divinities and canonized heroes are two characters, whose history and adventures, in many respects, bear so striking a resemblance to those of our blessed Saviour, that, since one of these

renowned personages, CRISHNA, flourished one thousand years *before* his advent, and the other, SALIVAHANA, was *co-æval* with him, commencing his existence on earth in the very first year of the Christian æra, a person ignorant of the frauds and interpolations of the Brahmins, and not deeply impressed with a conviction of the truths of Christianity, might be led to suppose that the latter, if not wholly an imposture, at least stood indebted to the former for a considerable portion of the facts recorded in its sacred page.

If, my Lords, such were indeed the deplorable case; if the whole scriptural account of the life, miracles, and death of Christ be a plagiarism from Hindoo books of higher, or even of equal antiquity with the æra of Christianity; if the *divine* Crishna, as he is there invariably denominated, or the half-deified Salivahana acted the same part in India which the Saviour of the world acted in Palestine, it is of little consequence who adopts the doctrine of LUTHER, or who of CALVIN; or how widely are diffused the heresies of Arius and Socinus. The pretension of the former to divine honours, as an incarnation of the preserver Veeshnu, have been long known in Europe by the publication of the BAGAVADAM, and the ostentatious blazonry of his miraculous deeds; while his *healing the sick*, and *raising even the dead to life*, have often, by the sceptics of France, been insidiously contrasted with the genuine miracles of the true and only Preserver.

The more wonderful history of Salivahana has only been recently imported into Europe, in the ninth volume of the Asiatic Researches; and for it we are indebted to the particular researches of the indefatigable Mr. Wilford, who, dreading a repetition of former impositions practised upon him by the Brahmins, produces the most authentic vouchers for the authority of the manuscripts whence it is taken. Concerning the date of the original composition, nothing is determined, nor can indeed be expected, for Mr. Wilkins, whose authority is indisputable, has informed us, in the Preface to the Heetopades, "that few Sanscrit books bear either the name of the real author, or *the date of the year* in which they were written;" what surer subterfuge than this can be found for the most daring impositions? and, convicted as the Brahmins have been, in the instance of Mr. Wilford, of direct and palpable forgery, how is it possible to give them a moment's credit for records and facts not sanctioned either by the internal evidence of the volume itself, or other indisputable testimony.

I have truly applied to the history last mentioned, that of Salivahana, the epithet of *more wonderful*, because the assumptions of this new intruder on the notice of the Christian theologian, are, in some respects, of a higher class than those of his predecessor. In the birth of CRISHNA, for instance, though an AVATAR, and that birth was *predicted*, nothing supernatural is pretended, he being the son of mere

human parents; his father VASUDEVA, his mother DEVACI. But in respect to SALIVAHANA, in addition to his birth being also predicted, the Christian will be shocked to read that he is represented *as being born of a* VIRGIN, and that his nominal earthly progenitor was a CARPENTER, &c. &c. I shall presently detail these particulars more at large in various extracts from the volume itself, and firmly hope that I shall be able to find an antidote for the poison thus attempted to be diffused.

The region, whence these attacks upon Christianity have constantly proceeded, I must again repeat, is HINDOSTAN; a region alternately productive, as it should seem, of *good* and *evil* to the Christian cause, although the apparent *evil*, upon due investigation, often turns out to be eventual *good*, and calumnious cavils are generally converted into a direct corroboration of what they were intended to undermine and destroy. Notwithstanding, therefore, in a preceding paragraph, I have used the doubtful word *presumed*, in respect to the evidences in favour of the truth of Christianity, deduced from the Brahminical doctrines and ritual, before this Address shall be concluded, I hope to be able to convince your Lordships, in spite of some partial exaggerations of facts, and some incidental efforts of overstrained zeal in its hallowed cause, that such corroboration *has actually been afforded*. Having been formerly very much engaged, as is well known to many of your Lordships, in researches

of a nature connected with this subject, and, in fact, particular portions of my own writings, from their purport being misapprehended, having possibly given occasion to some of the mistakes alluded to, I hold it a duty, while yet my life is spared, and my faculties are unimpaired, to return to the investigation, to repel the bold aggression in question, and to prevent the effect of any misapprehensions of which I may unfortunately have been the cause, by candidly confessing my own errors, where they may have unintentionally occurred.

CHRISTIANITY WANTED NO SUPPORT FROM INDIAN RECORDS; BUT HAS UNEXPECTEDLY DERIVED IT FROM THAT SOURCE.

PREVIOUSLY, however, to my entering upon the important subject which is the more immediate object of this discussion, I consider myself bound to reply to an accusation repeatedly, but very unjustly, brought against writers engaged on the same side of the question with myself, that we have endeavoured to prop up the adamantine fabric of the Christian religion with pillars constructed of perishable Indian materials. For myself, and for all those whom I have the honour to know, as at all coinciding with me in opinion, or co-operating with me in exertion, towards the accomplishment of the great work which we have respectively undertaken, viz. the vindication of the national faith from insult and reproach, directed against it from an Asiatic

quarter, I indignantly deny the accusation. But when, many years back, Messrs. Bailli, Dupuis, Voltaire, Volney, and the whole French infidel school had once hoisted their standard—their boldest standard of defiance—on the ground of the presumed unfathomable antiquity of India, its sciences, and history; when its wild and fabulous cosmogony, its vaunted astronomical tables, referring us back, for their origin, to immense revolved ages, and their solar and lunar dynasties of its imaginary sovereigns, in fact their *planetary gods*, extending beyond human calculation, together with the total denial of a *general deluge* having ever taken place in the high regions of Hindostan, were perseveringly urged in direct opposition to, and intended to be utterly subversive of, the Mosaic records; when such, I say, was the case, and the fact is well known, the defenders of the nobler Christian code had an undoubted right, nay, it was their bounden duty, rigidly to investigate these ancient Indian memoirs; and if, after strict and cautious examination, by persons properly qualified to decide, as in the instance of Sir W. Jones, and other able investigators, accurately made on the spot, they were found remarkably to corroborate, instead of invalidating the truth of those records, they possessed an equally undoubted right to turn the tables on their adversaries, in their turn to exult, and decorate their triumph with the trophies of so honourable a victory.

THE VAUNTED ASTRONOMICAL TABLES OF INDIA FOUNDED IN FALLACY.

INSTEAD of possessing an antiquity mounting up almost to eternity in numberless YUGS, CALPAS, and MANWANTARAS, it was soon discovered that the Indians calculated time by *the bright and dark halves of the moon;* in short, that their boasted *year* was only a FORTNIGHT; in some instances only a DAY of 24 hours; and that similar exaggerations, in astronomy, had in every respect taken place. By later enquiries, these facts have been still more decisively proved; and the astronomer LAPLACE, in 1809, answers Bailli, his sceptical brother of 1787, by asserting the utter impossibility of the famous tables of Tirvalore, which boast an origin of 3102 years before the commencement of the Christian æra, being founded on just and actual calculation. His statements being extremely important towards the design of this investigation, I add the passage from that able astronomer's *System du Monde*, as recently and luminously translated by Mr. Pond, the very ingenious successor of Dr. Maskelyne, at Greenwich.

"The Indian tables have two principal epochs, which go back, one to the year 3102, the other to the year 1491, before the Christian æra. These epochs are connected with the mean motions of the

sun, moon, and planets in such a manner, that one is *evidently fictitious.* The celebrated astronomer above alluded to, (BAILLI) endeavours, in his Indian Astronomy, to prove that the first of these epochs is founded on observation. Notwithstanding all the arguments are brought forward with that interest which he so well knew how to bestow on subjects the most difficult, I am still of opinion, that this period was *invented* for the purpose of giving a common origin to all the motions of the heavenly bodies in the zodiac. In fact, computing according to the Indian tables, from the year 1491 to 3102, we find a general conjunction of the sun, and all the planets, as these tables suppose; but their conjunction differs too much from the result of our best tables, to have ever taken place, which shews *that the epoch to which they refer, was not established on observation.*" *

On this occasion, I cannot deny myself the pride and satisfaction of remarking, how much this decision of Mr. Laplace confirms the strictures which I then had the honour to publish in reply to the assumptions of M. Bailli, relative to the whole system of the Indian Astronomy, in the first volume of my Ancient India, which came out in 1795, when the French Revolution was at its height, and his, and other dangerous productions were as yet unanswered. I imputed the origin of these boasted tables, of Tervilore in particular, to retrograde calculations;

* Laplace, Vol. ii. p. 250. London edit.

and the event has proved that I was right. The reader will find the 8th Chapter of that History concluding with the following observation. "Every body at all conversant with astronomy, knows WITH WHAT EASE, AND TO WHAT DISTANT PERIODS, IT IS IN THE POWER OF SKILFUL ASTRONOMERS TO CARRY UP THEIR RETROGRESSIVE CALCULATIONS; TO FORM SUPPOSITIOUS ÆRAS OF UNFATHOMABLE ANTIQUITY, EXISTING ONLY IN IMAGINATION; AND TO STAMP UPON THOSE ÆRAS THE COUNTERFEIT IMPRESSIONS OF TRUTH, AND THE SANCTION OF APPARENT AUTHENTICITY."*

On the same ground, I also combated the presumptuous statements of M. Dupuis, so impudently brought forward and blazoned in Volney's Ruins; and asserting, that the signs of the zodiac must at least be 16,000 years old, because there are many probable arguments to shew that Libra was formerly the sign of the *vernal*, and Aries of the *autumnal* equinox; or, in other words, that since the origin of astronomy, the precession of the equinoxes had carried forward by *seven* signs, the primitive order of the zodiac; statements the more daring and objectionable, because he well knew at the time that a vast number of ages must have necessarily elapsed before the motions of the sun, moon, and planets, could be ascertained with tolerable exactness; before proper instruments could

† See the History of Ancient India, Vol. i. p. 271.

be invented to take the height of the pole, and elevation of the stars; and before their several positions in the heavens could be accurately noted on descriptive tables, or a celestial sphere and a zodiac formed.

My objections to these magnified chronological statements, your Lordships will please to observe, had no concern with the *age of the globe* itself, which we inhabit, and which, for aught we know, and for any thing decidedly said by Moses to the contrary, may have rolled, as modern geologists are fond of asserting, for uncounted ages, but with the *race of mortals who now inhabit it;* the origin of whose existence upon it is limited, by the sacred records, to a period of about 6000 years; and this fact is confirmed by all that we know of the gradual civilization of the human race, the history of the arts and sciences, and the monuments of ages, already sunk in eternal oblivion.

Having thus in part, cleared the way to an investigation of considerable length, and of high importance, and requesting the patient and candid attention of your Lordships, to what will be submitted to you in subsequent Letters, I have the honour to be, My Lords,

Your Lordships obedient,

And faithful Servant,

THOMAS MAURICE.

British Museum,
1st January, 1812.

LETTER II.

My Lords,

Advancing in that comprehensive survey of things, which it is absolutely necessary to take previously to the consideration of the momentous question which I have engaged to elucidate, I now proceed to the discussion of other important matters connected with the early history and sciences of India.

THE INDIAN COSMOGONY, THOUGH BLENDED WITH PHYSICAL FABLES, CONSONANT WITH THE MOSAIC.

As the enquiries undertaken and alluded to in my former Letter, became more extended, and the Indian system of the cosmogony was examined, so far from opposing, it was found, in its great outline, unequivocally to corroborate the statements of the Mosaic records: and so marked was the similarity in many points between them, particularly in respect to the *primitive chaos*, dark, void, and turbid; in their notion of Brahma or the divine spirit, recumbent in the egg, bright as gold, *floating*

on the primordial waters; in the successive fabrication of the sun, moon, and stars; and lastly, in the formation of *man, in the image of his maker*, or, to use the Hindoo term, the DIVINE MALE*—that scepticism, alarmed and confounded, began to shift its ground, and at length exultingly exclaimed, "In India are to be found the sources of the Hebrew cosmogony, obtained by Moses through Egyptian conduits."

Rejecting the natural and easy solution of the difficulty in which they found themselves involved, and which *formed the basis* of all that I composed in the initial chapters of my "Ancient India," viz. TRADITIONS, relative to these important events preserved, with many variations in all the branches of the great patriarchal family, wheresoever dispersed—rejecting, I say, this satisfactory hypothesis, rejecting the simple, sublime, and dignified account of Moses, totally unencumbered as it is with the puerile conceptions, and mythological allusions of Brahmin physics, the mundane egg, the lotos, &c. which so decidedly distinguishes the original from the degraded and mutilated copy, our opponents pertinaciously insisted that the Brahmin archives were the real fountain whence Moses drew the materials of his cosmogony.

* The reader will find all these particulars detailed in the Institutes of Menu, Chap. I. p. 1. and subsequent.

INSIDIOUS PARALLEL BETWEEN THE HEBREW AND HINDOO COSMOGONY CONSIDERED AND REFUTED.

In the preface to the fifth volume of the Asiatic Researches, published in London, but certainly not authorised by the Asiatic Society, the two systems of the cosmogony, Hindoo and Hebraic, are exhibited together, and elaborately contrasted in the same page, and the preference is manifestly, though insidiously given to that of the former. It was thought important at the time that this preface or *advertisement*, as with affected humility it was denominated, should receive an answer, and myself being referred to for that purpose, I drew up the best reply the time would admit of, and which appeared in a respectable journal of the day. The whole is too long for insertion in these pages, but it contained the subjoined observations, which I shall introduce, by informing the reader, that the writer of the obnoxious critique in question, very obligingly uses his utmost endeavours to turn the arguments of Sir W. Jones against the very system (the Mosaic) which, upon conviction of its truth, he was strenuously defending. In his Dissertation on the supposed age of the Vedas, prefixed to the Institutes of Menu, the President had admitted, from circumstances pre-

viously stated, but still very problematical, the *possibility*, the *bare possibility* that the YAJUR VEDA, the oldest of them might be of the age of 1580 years] before Christ, which, as he observes, would make it older than the five books of Moses; for Moses was not born, according to Usher, till 1571 before Christ. The possible age of the publication of the Institutes of Menu, he supposes might be 1280 years before Christ, but the more probable one, from arguments preceding those adduced, he intimates might be 880 years before that æra. On the ground of this information, so cautiously given, the writer in question, proceeds to remark, as follows:

"The writings of MOSES have generally been considered as more ancient than those of any other person: but the Hindu Scriptures, so far as the researches of several learned men have extended, appear to be of very high antiquity, and are even carried by some beyond the time of the Hebrew Lawgiver. Sir. W. Jones, in his Preface to the "Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of MENU, according to the Gloss of CULLU'CA," carries the highest age of the *Yajur véda* 1580 years before the birth of CHRIST, which is nine years previous to the birth of MOSES, and ninety before MOSES departed from Egypt with the Israelites. This date, of 1580 years before Christ, seems the more probable, because the Hindu sages are said to have delivered their knowledge orally."

He then commences the comparison in question, the resembling passages in the Hebrew and Hindu cosmogonies being placed parallel to each other in the same page; and it is worthy of remark, that opposed to those two energetic lines, as they stand in that page, forming the first verse of the Pentateuch; *In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth;* there occurs a text of the Hindoo composition, merely descriptive of the same fact, consisting of no less than eighteen lines, an evident paraphrase of the former. Even if the original YAJUR VEDA itself had been quoted, this circumstance would have destroyed its credit as the original composition; but the verses cited are from these very Institutes of Menu, the Indian legislator, not of the age of 1580, but possibly of 1280, and more likely of only 880 before Christ. My observations on the fact itself of the interpolation, and the contrasted passages, as inserted in the same respectable journal, were as follows:

"ON opening the fifth volume, we were not a little surprised to observe what is called an ADVERTISEMENT prefixed to it, and containing what we conceive to be a very unfair statement of a most important fact, in language very intelligible, though affectedly delicate; and asserting the claim of the Hindoo scriptures to an antiquity greater than that of the Mosaic writings; those writings, for the authenticity and priority of which to all human records, the illustrious institutor of the Asiatic Society

was an able and strenuous advocate. The attempt, therefore, to invalidate that claim, is by no means respectful to his memory; and as there is no name prefixed or added to this Advertisement, it is evidently an interpolation, the more pernicious, because insinuations of this kind, from such a quarter, must have a direct tendency to do material injury among that class of readers, who may not have discernment to detect the fallacy of the argument. We think it important to do so, and shall devote a considerable portion of our present Number to that purpose. There is an apparent candour runs through the production, to whomsoever it belongs, which does not in fact, exist in it. We object to the whole, but particularly to the parts which we shall extract, and the inferences drawn from them, because they give the very opposite result to the conclusion made by Sir William Jones, after profound investigation of this important subject."

After citing the above, and some other passages not necessary to be again quoted, as their purport will be seen in the answer, my observations were thus continued: "On this passage we must observe, *first*, that all *genuine* traditional accounts preserved in Asia of the Cosmogony must, of necessity, bear some resemblance to the account given by Moses in the Pentateuch, and the nearer that resemblance, we add, the more authentic probably the tradition. It is generally believed among Christians that Moses, in writing his account of the creation, was

inspired; but still the memory of the fact, and the order of events might be, and most probably were, treasured in the breasts of the primitive race of men, and by them handed down, from father to son, from Adam to Noah, and his posterity, through a series of generations. Now, if the MENU of India and the NOAH of Scripture were, as there is every reason to suppose, the same person, it is naturally to be expected that the leading features in the Indian and Hebrew description of that event should nearly correspond; and the codes of Menu and the Mosaic Pentateuch powerfully corroborate, as they are known to do, each other. It is exceedingly unfair to argue, as is insinuated here, that Moses borrowed his Cosmogony from the Hindu books; because, setting for a moment all idea of his *inspiration* aside, he could go back to the same sources of intelligence with the Hindoos themselves; since, as Sir W. Jones himself has elsewhere justly observed, he lived at a period not so remote from the days of Noah, but that he might have obtained the particulars of his history from one or other of the immediate descendants of the virtuous Shem. Were the parallel extracts, therefore, still more similar than they are, it by no means follows that the Hebrew is a copy of the Hindoo Cosmogony; while the verity of the former is greatly corroborated by all the circumstances that evince the resemblance, in the great outline, of the latter system to it.

"But, *secondly*, were the VEDAS, or rather the

YAJUR VEDA, composed in the early age contended for, i.e. 1580 years before Christ, or 90 before the departure of Moses from Egypt, what has this circumstance to do with the point in debate, or how does it prove that the code of Moses was taken from the Institutes of Menu? a law-tract expressly stated by the translator, in his Preface, to have been written only 1280 years before Christ, or 300 years posterior in time to the Vedas, and above 200 years AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF MOSES FROM EGYPT. If the author had favoured us with extracts from the particular *Veda* in question, and opposed them to the Mosaic in the same page, and in the same manner as he has arranged those in his *Advertisement*, it would have been somewhat to the purpose, and we should then have been better able to judge of the conformity between them, and to decide which was the *original*, and which the *copy*. But as the matter now stands, there is every appearance of the Cosmogony of the Institutes being borrowed from that of Moses; at least there is far better ground for this supposition than the contrary, since the production is so much later in point of time. Besides, it should be remembered, that when the President mentioned the year 1580 before Christ, as the highest *possible* age of the *Vedas*, he speaks of the whole as conjecture; as a thing of extreme uncertainty. In another place, while he allows the very early diffusion, ORALLY, of the doctrines contained in them, he

limits their age as a written composition, to the 12th century before Christ; and even in the Preface to these very Institutes (a circumstance which should have forcibly struck the attention of the writer, before he ventured on these rash strictures), he assigns the low date of only 880 years before Christ, as the probable period of their being collected into a volume.* These vaunted books, therefore, of the Hindoos, could not have been seen by the Hebrew legislator, much less have been copied by him; and at the vast distance which he was from the scene of the promulgation of the *Vedas*, it is not probable, that even a report of the doctrines contained in them had reached him, from a race among whom a punishment worse than death (*the loss of cast*) awaited the divulger of the hallowed dogmas inculcated in them. What foreigner before Sir W. Jones, and another member or two of the Asiatic Society, was ever able to acquire or to read the *Vedas* in their original dialect; and can we suppose the Brahmins were more communicative of their contents in ancient than in modern periods? Tortures and the dread of death could never make them disclose the secret of those venerated books; all the allurements held out to them by the mild and magnificent Akber for this purpose were of no avail; and to obtain some little insight into them, he was compelled to have recourse to a perfidious stratagem that disgraced him. The story of Feizi

* Consult the Preface to the Calcutta edition of the Institutes, in quarto, p. 8.

and his Brahmin preceptor, is equally interesting and well known. The similitude of the narration, therefore, and it is only a general one, can alone be accounted for on the ground of *tradition;* and the greatest honour redounds to Moses from a comparison intended, though not *professedly*, to degrade him.

The " Asiatic Researches" is a work so highly respectable: it commenced with such a noble defence of *revealed religion*, in the various dissertations of the excellent founder of the Society; and the spirit of Jacobin scepticism, which has been so widely diffused through Europe by our Gallic rivals, may be so much encouraged by any deviation from the first principles on which it was conducted, that we heartily wish, for the credit and character of the London editors, that the strictures in question had not been admitted. There are other paragraphs towards the close still more offensive, but we forbear to cite them, and recommend to our readers in binding up the book, to leave them out entirely, as they cannot be properly said to make any part of the fifth volume.*

The Indian Accounts of a General Deluge, and the earliest post-diluvian ages, decidedly corroborative of the Mosaic.

Again we were informed by the hardened progeny of Indian scepticism that, in Hindostan, the inhabit-

† See British Critic for August 1800.

ants had no record of a GENERAL DELUGE; but it has also been incontestably proved, from the same high authority, that, so far is this from being the case, their three first avatars, the MATSYA, or *Fish*; the COURMA, or *Tortoise;* the VARAHA, or *Boar*, have a direct unequivocal allusion to that awful catastrophe; and that in the overwhelming waters of that deluge all then living, except a certain great and pious king, and seven upright men, the seven REYSHEES, making together the sacred OGDOAS, so celebrated in Asiatic antiquity, were *utterly swallowed up*. Astronomy, in this instance, has proved friendly to Christianity, for those *seven* Reyshees were early raised to the skies, and constellated in the PLEIADES; as the presiding genii of which stars they are constantly referred to in the ancient astronomical fables of India.

We are farther informed, in corroboration of the sacred volume, that, in the fourth, or SING avatar, a tyrannical and blaspheming monarch was destroyed in the very moment of his blasphemy, by the enraged deity issuing, in the form of a *man-lion*, from a bursting column of marble, which in the order of events should point to the calamity of Babel, where the greatest monument ever constructed by the power and arrogance of man was destroyed, as the Asiatic records attest, by thunder and whirlwind from that heaven which it was intended to brave. As the fourth avatar probably alludes to the tyrant of Babylon, NIMROD,

the iniquitous hunter of men and beasts, the Orion of the sphere, so the fifth, or dwarf avatar, in which a haughty monarch, named BALI, is humbled by so contemptible an agent as an insignificant *dwarf*, it is more than probable, from analogy, was intended to designate (and the idea is at least sanctioned by the near resemblance of their names) the next mighty Babylonian despot, BELUS. In the two succeeding avatars, named RAMA, both great Asiatic warriors and legislators, it is scarcely possible, in our descent through those pristine ages, not to acknowledge the great Cuthite conquerors of that name, so renowned over all the eastern world; for, in decided corroboration of this supposition, observes the President, "the hypothesis that *government* was first established, *laws* enacted, and *agriculture* encouraged in India by RAMA, about 3800 years, agrees with the received account of Noah's death, and the previous settlement of his immediate descendants."*

I am perfectly aware how much this hypothesis, though first conceived in the mind of so great a genius, runs counter to the present favourite idea of Indian scholars, that *all the avatars*, and all the great recorded personages of high antiquity in India, are of ASTRONOMICAL ORIGIN; but being at the same time convinced how inseparably history and astronomy, that is, *civil* and *sidereal* annals, were

* On the Indian Chronology in Asiat. Research. Vol. ii. p. 132. Calcutta edition.

blended in very ancient periods, I am determined, on no account, to relinquish the ground on which, after the most deliberate reflection, I have proceeded in my Indian historical researches; and am neither to be frightened or bantered out of an hypothesis so consistent, so uniform, and so intimately connected, in its great outline, with the sacred and civil history of the world. I confess myself willing to allow to astronomy, as her just claim, a large portion of the ancient pagan history of the world, but not the WHOLE. Christianity, however, towers far above these air-built systems; its sublime and immutable dogmas have nothing to do with the vagaries of astronomers, or the dreams of philosophers. Standing firm on its adamantine foundations, it wants no support from other systems; but if attempted to be undermined by the advocates of those systems, its adherents will ever be found arrayed in celestial panoply, and animated with that immortal vigour which their cause inspires, to repel the daring outrage; and if a *new column be added* to the fabric, it is not intended by way of PROP to an edifice in no danger of falling, but it is a triumphal column, a pyramid of glory, erected on the ruin of a vanquished enemy! I am far from arrogating to myself any prominent share in the victory; but it is well known to your Lordships that, in this great and long contested cause, I have neither wanted activity, or zeal; nor, at the same time, have I wanted calumniators to detract from

my humble and well meant exertions. Unworthy instrument as I may be in the hands of Providence in contributing to its support, I will never desert the honourable post at which I am stationed, in the hour of danger; a post which I *have* now maintained for above twenty years, and *will* maintain, to the best of my abilities, till the last moment of my existence.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords,

With profound respect,

Your Lordship's obedient,

And faithful Servant,

THOMAS MAURICE.

LETTER III.

My Lords,

After the necessary preliminary observations in my two preceding Letters, I come, at length, to that far more interesting and important subject, which, in the total silence of abler advocates in this great cause, I have undertaken to investigate.

Primæval traditions and predictions relative to the INCARNATION of the Messiah, the true origin of the Indian AVATARS.

Having failed by means of the arrogant assumptions of astronomers, of cosmogonies founded on the baseless structure of puerile fables, and of imaginary solar and lunar dynasties, to shake the centered stability of the Mosaic fabric, the subtle sacerdotal tribe of India proceeded, by secret and insidious assaults, to undermine that nobler edifice of which the Mosaic dispensation formed the basis; to degrade from his high dignity the *true Saviour of the world*; and clothe with his immortal robes the gods, demi-gods, and heroes of their fanciful mythology. In fact, the attacks, secret and avowed,

from this Asiatic quarter of the world, aided by European ingenuity, are now become so continued, so numerous, and so artful, that all the zeal, all the vigilance, and all the abilities of the Christian church, ought to be incessantly exerted to withstand and annihilate them.

Having already, in the second Volume of my Ancient India, presented the public with the entire history of CRISHNA, from a valuable manuscript in the British Museum, a translation by Mr. Halhed from a Persian copy of the BHAGAVAT, one of the most esteemed of the PURANAS, it is only necessary for me, in this place, to give a summary of facts from the introductory chapter to that history, for the elucidation of the succeeding statements, and without which they would, to the majority of readers, be almost unintelligible. It is indeed, more particularly incumbent on me so to do, as the "Ancient India," has been long out of print, and is not soon likely to be reprinted; though, had the argument been on the opposite side of the question, in all probability, before this time, editions would have been multiplied.

I commenced that dissertation with remarking, that the first idea of an AVATAR, or divine incarnation, could only have originated in a perversion of the primæval tradition relative to AN INCARNATE WORD, the promised Seed, who in due time was ordained to crush the head of the bruised serpent. That the whole Asiatic world,

from the earliest post diluvian æra to that in which the Messiah appeared, was big with the expectation of such a mighty DELIVERER in the course of ages to appear on earth; that it appeared indubitable that the Hindoos, idolizing some eminent character of antiquity, distinguished, in the early annals of their nation, by heroic fortitude and exalted piety, had applied to that character the ancient predictions concerning an INCARNATE DEITY, handed down to them from their Chaldæan ancestors; and that we might the more justly affirm this of the Avatar of Crishna, because it is allowed to be the most illustrious of them all; since, according to the Indians themselves, in the *seven* preceding Avatars, the deity brought only an *ansa*, or portion of his divinity; but, in the *eighth*, he descended in all the plenitude of the godhead, and was Veeshnu himself in a human form. I farther observed that the memory of this grand promise was cherished with religious reverence throughout the whole ancient, and particularly the Asiatic, world; that it entered deeply into their symbolical superstitions, and was engraved aloft amidst their mythologic sculptures. Every where was to be seen a god contending with his adversary, an envenomed serpent: Osiris, Hercules, Crishna, and Apollo, are beheld alternately to aim at the slimy monster, the victorious javelin, or wield the destroying club. The astronomers of Assyria, exalted to the sphere the mysterious emblem, on the northern division of which conspicu-

ously may be seen the *foot* of the celestial Hercules about to trample on the *head* of the dragon, while the Brahmins of India consecrated the image in the noblest of their Avatars.

THE PROPHECIES OF JOB, OF BALAAM, AND OF ZOROASTER; THE VISIT OF THE LATTER TO THE BRAHMINS.

I adduced, as proofs, of that general and anxious expectation of an incarnate deity's descent, that sublime prophetic exclamation of the Chaldean Job, *I know that my* REDEEMER *liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;* and that of Balaam, which follows next in order of time: *I shall see him* (the Messiah) *but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a* STAR *out of Jacob,* and *a* SCEPTER *shall rise out of Israel.* I observed that the light of that star, now faintly glimmering, and now transcendently luminous, beamed through all the succeeding ages that rolled on from Moses to Malachi, the last of the prophets; and that during the four hundred years which intervened between that prophet and its complete emersion, God left not himself without a witness in the pagan world; that the ancient traditions began to be more widely diffused through Asia; and the Heathen oracles themselves, as well those that were written, as those that were vocally given, afforded their combined testimony to the *oracles of truth.*

The most distinguished of the oracles written in the ancient world, were those attributed to ZOROASTER, or ZERDUSHT, whose history, whose place of residence, and whose doctrines, so similar, in many respects, but in particular in the veneration paid by them to the *solar orb*, and *elementary fire*, to those of the Brahmins, demand particular notice in this investigation: since it was probably, through the medium of the celebrated Archimagus of that name, who is known to have visited India 520 years before Christ, that the Brahmins first arrived at any knowledge of the true character, or any particulars of the history, of the REAL PERSONAGE to whom the ancient traditions, immemorially flourishing among them, pointed; and, by a comparison of which with those traditions, they were afterwards induced, as I firmly believe they were, to interpolate their sacred books with passages extracted not only from the *genuine*, but the *spurious*, Gospels. In proof of that visit, I must again beg to bring before the reader, the passage from Ammianus Marcellinus, already quoted for that purpose in the Indian Antiquities, in which he informs us that from the adjoining mountains of Bactria, in whose capital of Balk, ZERDUSHT had his school and principal fire-temple, that venerable sage, together with his patron Hystaspes, paid a visit to the Indian Magi, in the secluded regions of UPPER INDIA, whom he found buried in the deep solitude of their native forests, exercising their lofty genius in profound astrono-

mical speculations, and celebrating the awful sanctities of their sidereal religion. The solemn and mysterious rites and doctrines, which he there saw and learned, he afterwards taught his disciples, the Persian Magi, and they were delivered traditionally down to their posterity for a succession of ages.*

This visit of ZERDUSHT to the Brachmanes evinces the intimate connection and correspondence between these two celebrated sects of Eastern philosophers, which seems to have continued from that period, about five centuries before Christ, down to the seventh century after the Christian æra; when, on the irruption of the Arabian robbers, the miserable remains of the Magian sect, under the name of PARSEES, and the greater part of them, as I shall hereafter demonstrate, infected with *the Manichæan heresy*, fled for security into the domains of their Indian brethren, and settled, where they now remain, in the western districts *Superioris Indiæ:* in fact, to that very country in which, above a thousand years before, the great Archimagus had both imparted and imbibed a considerable portion of his mystic devotion. It is remarkable that, previously

* Hystaspes, qui quum superioris Indiæ secreta fidentius penetraret, ad nemorosam quandam venerat solitudinem, cujus tranquillis silentiis præcelsa Bracmanorum ingenia potiuntur; eorumque monitu rationes mundani motus et siderum, purosque sacrorum ritus, quantum colligere potuit, eruditus, ex his quæ didicit, aliqua sensibus magorum infudit: quæ illi cum disciplinis præsentiendi futura, per suam quisque progeniem posteris ætatibus tradunt. Ammiani Marcellini, lib. xiii.

to his entering on the public function, which, under the patronage of Darius Hystaspes, he assumed, the residence of ZERDUSHT had been in Media; (for, according to Porphyry, it was in the Median mountains adjoining to Persia that Zoroaster first consecrated a cavern to Mithra, or the SOLAR FIRE;†) and to *Azerbijian*, which means the *region of fire*, and is only another name for Media itself, the Hindoos, and all the ancient fire worshippers of Asia, have been immemorially accustomed to make pilgrimages. It was on ELBURS, a mountain of that province, that the most ancient PYRÆIA were erected in honour of the bright and most perfect symbol of deity, and there they were night and day guarded by priests stationed near them for the pious purpose. It was not however, on the heights of Elburs that the first fire-temples blazed; the perverted philosophy of Chaldæa, deserting its proper object, the SOURCE ITSELF OF LIGHT AND HEAT, had long before induced its infatuated votaries to erect stupendous CHAMANIMS to that element, as the primary all-powerful agent in nature, in Ur, of Chaldæa; an act of insane impiety, which, attended as it was with the concomitant Sabian superstition of fabricating and adoring images made under supposed planetary influences, drove the virtuous Abraham into voluntary exile.

Without degrading this great reformer of the Persian religion, as Hyde has done, to the situation

† Porphyrius de Antro Nympharum, p. 254.

of a menial slave in the family of Ezekiel or Daniel, we may yet allow it to be extremely probable, and we are justified by chronology in supposing, that, in his youth, he might have familiarly conversed at Babylon, during the long residence of the Jewish captives at that city, with one or the other of these holy men; at least his writings and his precepts, so far as they are known to us, demonstrate an intimate acquaintance with the principal rites of the Jewish religion, and a diligent perusal of the ancient scriptures of the Hebrew nation. The same active curiosity, the same ardent thirst of knowledge, that led him to the woody recesses of the Brahmins, would naturally, had he no other motives, impel him rigidly to scrutinise into a system of religion so far exalted, in sublimity and purity, above the groveling systems of idolatrous worship that polluted the altars of surrounding nations. To this important acquisition of knowledge from its divine source, he doubtless added all the stores of traditional wisdom of the Noachidæ, that had descended down to him through the corrupted channel of the pagan philosophers of Asia.

Thus distinguished by the sovereigns, and thus familiar with the literati of Asia, equally known to the prophets of the true God, and the ministers of that false religion which had erected itself on its ruins, was it possible for the friend of Darius and the disciple of Daniel to be ignorant of that sublime passage, in the 7th chapter of Isaiah, which predicts in such

express terms the miraculous birth of the true Messiah, BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON! or that in the 9th, which, in so decisive a manner, distinctly designates his exalted character, and denominates him, WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE! Could he possibly be ignorant of all that long chain of astonishing prophecies successively, and at that time recently, uttered by the same prophet, by Jeremiah, and other inspired men, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews by the Babylonian sovereign? or of the subversion of the Babylonian empire itself by the Medes and Persians? those prophecies in which CYRUS himself was twice mentioned by name 150 years before he was born. Could he be ignorant of the solemn decree of Cyrus for the return and reinstatement of the Jews in their ancient domains, religious rites, and civil privileges? or, on the retardation of that event by their determined enemies, of the confirmation of the decree by Cyrus, by his patron Hystaspes, in the fourth year of his reign? These important national events, befalling a people of so peculiar a theological cast, could not have passed unnoticed under the very eye of one who united in his character at once the *courtier* and the *theologue*; and it is probable that he even befriended them in their second application for renewed permission to rebuild their temple. The conspicuous

rank and station of Zerdusht in the Persian empire, and on the great theatre of Asia, added to the celebrity of his learning, gave him an unbounded influence and authority over all the subordinate classes and colleges of the ancient Σοφοι, dispersed over the Eastern world, among whom the Brahmins must be enumerated; and an author of high repute, from Oriental sources, informs us, that he absolutely predicted to his disciples, that, at no very distant period, *a* SACRED PERSONAGE *should issue from the womb of an immaculate* VIRGIN, *and that his coming would be preceded by a brilliant* STAR, *whose light would guide them to the place of his nativity.**

ADDITIONAL EVIDENCES OF AN EXPECTED MESSIAH BROUGHT FROM JEWISH HISTORY, AND FROM GREEK WRITERS.

WHATEVER truth there may be in the above relation, which I would not insert from an author of less respectability than Abulfaragius, it is certain that the Jews themselves, either grounding their belief on the prophecy uttered by Balaam against the secret malignant purpose of his heart, and therefore justly supposed to be put into his mouth by the Omnipotent power that watched over Israel, or induced by patriarchal traditions, firmly expected the prophe-

† Vide Abulfaragii Historia Dynastiarum, p. 54, edit. Oxon. 1673.

tical allusion to a brilliant appearance in the heavens, to be literally fulfilled, and that a STAR should, in fact, precede the coming of the Messiah. It is in vain that the Hebrew commentators fly to every subterfuge to avoid the imputation of indulging this notion, since their conduct, on a great national occasion, incontrovertibly establishes the fact. The impetuous zeal with which, in the 130th year of the Christian æra, they rushed to the standard of a military impostor, whom their perverted imaginations had exalted into the true Messiah, demonstrates that they thus interpreted the prediction.

At that time there flourished in Judæa a most celebrated Rabbi of the name of Akiba, a bitter enemy of the Christians, who, guided by ambition, or acting from the conviction of his mind, sanctioned the daring fraud. I allude to the famous impostor named BAR-COCHEBAS, whose rapid success and sanguinary devastations through all Palestine and Syria filled Rome itself with astonishment. In this barbarian, so well calculated by his cruelty to be the Messiah, according to the perverted conceptions of the Jews, Akiba declared that prophecy of Balaam, *a star shall rise out of Jacob*, was accomplished. Hence the impostor took his title of BAR-COCHEBAS, or *son of the star*; and Akiba not only publicly anointed him KING OF THE JEWS, and placed an imperial diadem upon his head, but followed him to the

field at the head of four-and-twenty thousand of his disciples, and acted in the capacity of master of his horse. To crush this dangerous insurrection, which happened in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, Julius Severus, prefect of Britain, one of the greatest commanders of the age, was recalled and dispatched from Rome, who retook Jerusalem, burnt that metropolis to the ground, and sowed the ruins with salt. The prediction, therefore, of Zerdusht was in unison with the Jewish faith and traditions; and, through his means, the hope and promise of a Messiah, whose character and office were but darkly conceived, were diffused widely over all the Eastern world; confirming the traditions immemorially cherished among the Pagan nations, and obscurely recorded in the venerable dogmas and writings of the oldest heathen philosophers.

In fact, I cannot consider, whatever may be genuine (and, doubtless, some portions *are* genuine, since all false coins have been preceded by originals of sterling weight and value) in the mystic theology contained in the Zoroastrian or Chaldæan oracles, the Orphic mysterious verses, the writings of Hermes Trismegist, and the Sibylline books, with all that we read in the Pythagoric and Platonic remains concerning a great secondary cause, or principle, the celestial Δημιουργος and Ζευς Βασιλευς of the world, in any other light than as mutilations of those primitive traditions; for from what other source could have originated the peculiarly strong and pointed

expressions that so frequently occur in those ancient compositions concerning a δευτερος Θεος, or second god, a δευτερος Νȣς, or second mind, a θεῖος Λογος, or divine Word, their Μιθρας Μεσιτης, or mediatorial Mithra, and Γεννητος Θεος, or generated god? The conceptions which gave birth to these expressions should doubtless be referred to the same origin with their notions concerning a Ψυχη Κοσμȣ, or soul of the world, and the symbolical theology which represented Brahma, or Osiris, *in loto arbore sedentem super aquam*, which are only corruptions of those primæval accounts that flourished in the patriarchal ages in respect to the functions and energic operations of the Holy Spirit. Hence, probably, the altar erected by the Athenians to the *unknown God*, hence that most remarkable but ill understood prophecy of the venerable Confucius, SI FAM YEU XIM GIM, *In the west, the* HOLY ONE *shall appear*,* Judæa being situated, in point of longitude, directly west from China. Hence, in many of the most sacred legends of pagan antiquity, a mode of phraseology seems to have prevailed, and sentiments to have been adopted, apparently founded on some obscure idea of the incarnation of the WORD, and exactly consonant to the assertion of the Scripture, that the WORD WAS MADE FLESH.

Having thus, my Lords, attempted to account for the origin of the fanciful doctrine of AVATARS,

* Consult Couplet Scient. Sin. lib. ii. p. 78, and Martinii Sin. Hist. lib. iv. p. 149.

and shewn the traditional sources whence such a motley character as the Indian Crishna might have been formed in the crude imagination of a people unenlightened by divine revelation, I shall in my next Letter demonstrate at how *early* a period both the *genuine* and the *spurious* gospels found their way to the shores of India, the channels by which they were conveyed, and their general diffusion among a people already prepared, by the ancient received doctrines of *incarnations*, to believe in that of the Christian Redeemer.

I have the honour to be,

My Lords,

With profound respect,

Your Lordship's obedient,

And faithful Servant,

THOMAS MAURICE.

LETTER IV.

MY LORDS,

DURING the wide excursion taken in the preceding Letters through eastern regions, having, from numerous and distant sources of intelligence, traditional and historical, been enabled to establish the truth of our original position, *that the* INDIANS, *with all the other nations of the Gentile world, had a notion of, and expected a* DELIVERER, we at length arrive at that important æra in which their conceptions on this subject became concentrated and embodied. Full of the sublime idea of this mighty Deliverer, and inflamed with all that they had heard, or read of his attributes and character, their romantic imaginations gave being to a personage such as never did nor ever could actually exist; distinguished by the noblest virtues, blended with the wildest follies; a compound of dignity and puerility, of austere virtue and unbounded libertinism. That personage was CRISHNA; and the very first paragraph of his allegorical history confirms all that has been said respecting this cause of his appearance among men; for, says the Bhagavat, "*At a period when the* EARTH *was overloaded with injustice and oppression,* SHE assumed the form of a cow (Isis), and went to utter her complaints to the preserver

Veeshnu. Veeshnu pitied her forlorn condition; and on her entering the divine palace of Vaicontha, a secret voice exclaimed, " I will become incarnate at Mathura, in the house of YADU, and will issue forth to mortal birth from the womb of DEVACI: it is time that I should display my power, and relieve the *oppressed* earth of its load."

Before, however, we proceed to more detailed accounts either concerning CRISHNA, or SALIVAHANA, let us attend to a fact of a far more important nature; the actual appearance on earth of that divine personage of whose INCARNATION all other vaunted incarnations are palpable and atrocious forgeries.

THE INCARNATION OF THE TRUE AND ONLY MESSIAH; THE ADORING MAGI, PERSIAN NOT ARABIAN, Σοφοι; THE CONDUCTING STAR, A PECULIARLY APPROPRIATE SYMBOL OF THE ADVENT TO AN ASTRONOMICAL PRIESTHOOD.

THE STAR that was to *arise out of Jacob*, and illumine Palestine, (and not only Palestine, but the whole earth,) at length made its appearance in the eastern horizon. The Persian Magi, addicted to the Sabian superstition, and not unmindful of the prediction of their great master Zerdusht,* from the

* It is very remarkable that this prediction is alluded to at the very opening of the EVANGELIUM INFANTIÆ, as I find

heights of the mountainous regions where they resided, and watched the motions of the heavenly bodies, had long been anxiously solicitous for the manifestation of the brilliant prodigy. The wonderful condescension of Divine Providence, in announcing this stupendous event to the Gentile world, by a sign the most intelligible to their comprehension, and after a mode the most consonant to the habits and prejudices of a race involved in

it translated from the Arabic, through the medium of which language it probably reached India, by Henry Sike, "*Ecce Magi venerunt ex Oriente Hierosolymas,* QUEMADMODUM PRÆDIXERAT *Zoradascht.*" Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti, cura Fabricii, vol. i. p. 173, edit. Hamburg. 1703. I think it important to mention this circumstance, in addition to what was cited in a former page from Abulfaragius; because, the Arabian author probably inserted it as one of the traditional dogmas of Zerdusht, preserved in his own school; for, there were Arabian as well as Persian Magi. He certainly found nothing of it in the Apocryphal Gospel, upon the same subject, in Greek, and ascribed to St. Thomas; for, that precedes the Arabic one, in the volume just cited, with the Latin version of Cotelerius. There are two very forcible reasons for supposing them both to have been fabricated in the earliest ages of Christianity; in the first place, the Greek version is mentioned in the works of Irenæus, who lived in the second century; and, secondly, we find many passages of the latter inserted almost *verbatim* in the text of the Koran of Mohammed, as I shall presently demonstrate. In fact, the *Evangelium Infantiæ* seems to have been the principal, though corrupted, medium by which that impostor arrived at any knowledge of Christianity.]

the depth of astronomical superstition, at once excites admiration and impresses gratitude on the reflecting mind. The physical phænomenon ordained to precede that appearance, *the morning-star to the Sun of Righteousness*, had already blazed forth, during the space of nearly two years, to the astonished disciples of ZERDUSHT, who, impatient to behold *the Desire of all Nations*, lost not a moment in obeying its summons, and in submitting themselves to its guidance. We shall not stop here, to examine the philosophical perplexities that appear to envelope this subject, of the star that appeared to the Magi: it has already been often and ably investigated, and the magnified difficulties in great part removed, by the efforts of learned and pious writers. But it should ever be remembered, that this was a *miraculous* display of omnipotent power, for the most glorious of purposes, and therefore cannot properly be brought before the tribunal of human reason: a display worthy of the immortal object to which it pointed, and one the truth of which is equally attested by sacred and prophane writers of antiquity. Whether, therefore, the phænomenon in question was, as I am inclined to think, the light of an *occult* star blazing suddenly forth in the heavens, (resembling that of superior effulgence, which appeared in Cassiopea in 1572, and which continued visible about sixteen months in our hemisphere,) and afterwards, to human eye, appa-

tently extinguished; a doctrine in perfect unison with the astronomy of the present day;* or whether, as seems to be determined by the generality of commentators, only a fiery meteor of an appearance unusually luminous; its uncommon lustre, and its punctual appearance at the time predicted, confirmed the ancient traditions, and animated the illustrious Σοφοι immediately to undertake a journey of many hundred leagues, over unknown mountains, rivers and deserts, to adore the bright original of which that refulgent orb was the emblem and index.

I am aware that the generality of Christian writers, on this subject of the journey of the Magi to Bethlehem, make it to have taken place from Arabia. To this opinion they have been principally induced by the proximity of that region of Asia to Palestine, and by a laudable desire to demonstrate the completion, on this occasion, of that prediction in the seventy-second Psalm, that *the kings of Sheba and Saba shall offer gifts to the new-born Messiah.* It is not, however, clear to me, that, at that period, the Arabians cultivated astronomy, and watched the nocturnal heavens, with the zeal of the more eastern astronomers; at

* The ancients themselves were not wholly inattentive to the changes that took place among the fixed stars. It was the appearance of a *new star* in the heavens, about 160 years before the incarnation, that induced Hipparchus to form the first catalogue of them, in order that posterity might notice any future changes that took place among them.

least, we have no proofs of the fact from history at all approaching to those which record the unwearied diligence of the Persian and Indian Magi. Allowing, therefore, those writers all the credit so justly due to their zeal and their erudition, still I must confess myself to be firmly of the opinion of the learned THOMAS HYDE, who determines that journey to have commenced from Persia, the original seat of the Magian school, and residence of the Archimagus; and the Scripture itself certainly justifies the conjecture, since, on their arrival in Judæa, as is supposed on the twelfth day after the birth of our Saviour, and on their being interrogated by Herod concerning the time of the first appearance in the East of the STAR that guided them thither, they returned him such an answer as induced the enraged king to order the immediate massacre of *all the children in Bethlehem, and the coasts thereof, from* TWO YEARS *old and under*; a period in less than which their journey could scarcely have been accomplished.

Although the number of the Magi has been fixed by ancient traditions, to *three*, yet, as no particular number is specified in Scripture, and as their direct route to Judæa lay through Arabia, it is not impossible but that, on making known their errand, they might have been joined by some of the Σοφοι of that country, also bearing the tributary frankincense and myrrh in which Arabia so much abounded, in addition to that gold which

was the peculiar produce of the wealthy regions lying still nearer the rising sun. The station of the STAR, used as the *secondary* instrument by Divine Providence to manifest to the Gentile world the birth of Christ, though splendidly conspicuous as far as the northern limits of Persia, was probably in that portion of the heavens which lies directly over Judæa. The predominant, and perhaps peculiar, light emaning from that STAR was their unerring guide to Bethlehem, at a period when travellers by *land* as well as by *sea*, were accustomed to guide themselves by the light of particular stars: for, what other guides could they have to direct them by night, when only journeys could be performed in that scorching region, over the vast sandy and tractless deserts of Asia. If it should be objected that the remote light of no star in the firmament, however brilliant and powerful, could point out to the Magi the particular habitation of the holy family, the hypothesis here adopted by no means excludes the more immediate exertion of divine power, in causing an inflamed meteor, or a radius of glory, to illuminate the spot; and this in all probability was the case. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive, and, though in every age the most renowned masters in the science of painting have attempted the sketch, for the powers of human genius accurately to pourtray, the august and affecting scene which, in mockery of all the pageantry of human magnificence, now took place in the stable

of the humble inn at Bethlehem;—the astonished parents, the prostrate Magi, the DIVINE CHILD, receiving, with a smile of ineffable benignity, the proffered treasures of the East:—Nature never witnessed such an awful scene but once; and liberated man, for whose emancipation these amazing scenes were transacted, ought to cherish the remembrance with pious rapture while thought and existence remain.

The scriptural account of the sidereal herald that announced to the Oriental Σοφοι the advent of the Saviour of the World, and of the subsequent journey and adoration of the Magi, wants not the collateral testimony of an eminent philosopher of those times; and, had the science of astronomy been then more generally cultivated, many others would undoubtedly have still remained.

Chalcidius, a writer who flourished not long after Christ, in a commentary upon the Timæus of Plato, discoursing upon portentous appearances of this kind in the heavens, in different ages, particularly speaks of this wonderful star, which, he observes, presaged neither diseases nor mortality, but the descent of a God among men:—*Stella, quam a Chaldæis observatam fuisse testantur, qui Deum nuper natum muneribus venerati sunt:*—a star, which is attested to have been observed by Chaldæan astronomers, who immediately hastened to adore and present with gifts the new-born Deity.

OBJECTIONS TO THE GENUINENESS OF THE TWO FIRST CHAPTERS OF ST. MATTHEW ANSWERED.

It would be disingenuous in this place to omit noticing that the two first chapters of St. Matthew, relating to the solemn facts described above, and tracing back the genealogy of Christ, have themselves, by certain writers not in other respects sceptical, been attacked as *spurious*. The circumstance has arisen principally from some magnified difficulties in the genealogical history in the first chapter, and from the astonishing nature of the facts recorded in the second,—the journey and adoration of the Magi, and the subsequent massacre of the infants by Herod. These writers found the argument for their spuriousness on a very absurd and chimerical basis. They *assume*, and it is mere *assumption*, without any kind of proof,) that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew or Syriac language only, and that the author of the Greek version added the initial chapters in question. It is an opinion, however, sanctioned by very high authority in antiquity, that the apostle was the author of both Gospels, and was induced to write them in two different dialects for the more extensive propagation of the sacred truths contained in them: the first, written, a very short time after our Lord's ascension, for the benefit of the Jewish converts; the

latter, somewhat later, for the instruction of the Gentile proselytes. Those holy and considerate persons who admitted the Greek Gospel, which has descended down to us among the canonical books, had, in all probability, seen the Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew also, and could easily have detected the forgery had it really been one; and no doubt can be entertained but that all the sacred books thus admitted underwent *a most rigid scrutiny*, and that their authenticity was first incontrovertibly established.

Although I conceived it would be disingenuous wholly to omit noticing a circumstance so well known to the learned as the spuriousness *attempted* to be fixed on these chapters, yet this is not the place for entering into any extended discussions on the subject. Indeed, it is rendered in a great degree unnecessary, as well by the futility of the objections themselves, as the laborious investigation of preceding writers, who may be consulted.* What is here offered is of a general nature, and retrospective on corresponding events in the annals of India; I shall, therefore, briefly observe, that, whatsoever difficulties there may be (as some there

* See two pamphlets on this subject: the one entitled, "Free Thoughts upon a Free Inquiry into the Authenticity of the First and Second Chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel;" the second, "The Authenticity of the First and Second Chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel vindicated;" and that "Free Inquiry" itself; all published about the year 1771.

certainly are, though none insuperable) in the former of these chapters, that treats concerning the genealogy of our Saviour, the strong connecting chain of evidence produced above, both collateral and positive, relative to the continued expectations of the whole Gentile world, and particularly of the Eastern Σοφοι, with whom all the traditional wisdom and venerable predictions of their ancestors for ages had been treasured, renders the fact recorded in the second, of the journey and adoration of the Magi, extremely probable, if not indisputable. The savage custom also, too generally practised by Eastern despots, of destroying a whole generation to make themselves sure of a single victim, will remove much of the improbability resulting from the horror of that deed; especially when it is considered, that Herod himself was at once the most profligate and sanguinary of tyrants, and, not long before, had put three of his own children to death, on the bare accusation of their having aspired to his crown, which drew from Augustus that well-known sarcasm, "*that he would choose rather to be Herod's hog than his son;*" a reproach, which might also have an aspect towards the massacre of the infant children at Bethlehem, probably not unreported by his enemies at the court of Rome.

For my own part, I am inclined to think, that the relation of these circumstances, with all the particulars by which they are accompanied in St. Matthew, has a far greater tendency to establish

than to invalidate the genuineness of the chapters in question, as well as the reality of the events recorded; for, would, indeed, any person have had the audacity, so soon after those events as the Gospel of St. Matthew (I mean the Greek Gospel, nearly as old as the original in Hebrew, and which, under the apostolical sanction, has descended, unmutilated, down to our own times) is known to have been promulged, to insert a relation, which, if not founded on *real facts*, could so easily have been confuted?—Or, waving for a moment all debate on the authenticity of these chapters, would the apostle himself, in the face of the whole Jewish nation, in the most decided manner, have affirmed, that these amazing transactions took place, *had they not been actually performed?* Were there *no Jews at that time living*, whose immediate ancestors resided in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, while these momentous scenes were acting, and who certainly wanted no incentive to expose any *false statement* of the early Christians with respect to the Messiah.

But, farther, I am of opinion, that an indubitable testimony, in favour of their authenticity, may be drawn from a quarter inveterately hostile to Christianity. Celsus, the most learned and able of its assailants, wrote his invective so early as the *middle of the second century;* and would Celsus, with all the sources of genuine information in his power, have alluded to these solemn facts, as related in this

Evangelist, which he evidently does, if cited correctly by Origen,* with a view to subvert the doctrine of Christ's divinity founded upon it, unless it formed at that time a part, and that an *undisputed* part, of the said Gospel?—It was extremely important to the purpose of the laboured argument of this celebrated Epicurean philosopher, that, in his attack upon Christianity, he should accurately have distinguished between the *genuine* and the *imputed* doctrines of its first professors. Any supposition to the contrary would be at once a degradation of his understanding and a subversion of his hypothesis. But, in truth, there scarcely existed a possibility of error on subjects so public and so notorious. That publicity is in the strongest manner intimated throughout the whole narration of St. Matthew. No part of this awful drama is represented as having been acted in the privacy of solitude, or in the shade of obscurity; every particular of the wonderful story is related with a dignified simplicity that bids defiance to the severest scrutiny. On the arrival of the Magi at Jerusalem, they speak of the STAR, and of the new-born King of the Jews, as things of public notoriety, as things known and seen by all.—*Where is he that is born King of the Jews; for, we have seen his* STAR? And the immediate convoking of the Sanhedrim by Herod, as well as his subsequent order to destroy the children, must

* Vide Origen contra Celsum, lib. i. p. 45, edit. 1658.

have greatly added to that notoriety. Again, Celsus, or, at least, the Jew, in Celsus, reproaches the Christians with the flight of their God into Egypt, as if a God were not able to protect himself from the cruel perfidy of man;* which argument, however absurd and futile, yet, as referring to what is related in the second chapter of Matthew, affords another proof that it *then stood where it is now found.* There are also other allusions in Celsus to this chapter, which demonstrate that it must then have been in existence; and, as that learned writer was well informed in all matters relating to Christianity, was not regarded in the light of an *interpolation*, but as the genuine writing of the Evangelist, and as containing a fundamental part of the Christian code. But the most important and satisfactory result of the whole inquiry is, that those events are only scoffed at and ridiculed by Celsus and his sceptical associates; they are not *denied*, nor are they, any more than the *miracles of Christ*, attempted to be disproved. The silence, therefore, of one of the most learned and determined adversaries of Christianity, on a point so momentous as the preceding, may justly be deemed no unimportant additional testimony to the truth of the awful facts under consideration.

We come at length to the consideration of the Indian historical accounts of CRISHNA and SALI-

* Vide Origen contra Celsum, lib. i. p. 48. idem. edit.

VAHANA, the usurpers of the honours and attributes of the tiue Messiah. Sir W. Jones, who had read the BHAGAVAT in the original, but whom later and profounder investigations into Sanscrit literarature have proved to be mistaken in respect to the age assigned by him to that and to all the puranas, has thus drawn the character of the former.

SKETCH OF THE HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF CRISHNA.

"THEIR second great divinity, CRISHNA, passed a life, according to the Indians, of a most extraordinary and incomprehensible nature. He was the son of DEVACI by VASUDEVA; but his birth was concealed through fear of the tyrant CANSA, *to whom it had been predicted that a child born at that time in the family would destroy him*: he was fostered, therefore, in Mathura, by an honest herdsman, surnamed Nanda, or happy, and his amiable wife Yasodha, who was constantly occupied in her pastures and her dairy!"* He grew up, under their care, a youth of perfect beauty, revered by the shepherds, adored by the shepherdesses; and the Hindus assert that he was distinguished above all the *avatars*, who had only an *ansa*, or portion of the divinity, while CRISHNA was the *person* of VEESHNU himself in a human form. The following anecdote related of him, while yet a child, will serve

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 267. Calcutta edition.

to illustrate his character. The young urchin of a deity had made free with the curds and milk of the dairy, for which he was reprimanded by his foster-mother Devaci. CRISHNA, the personified VEESHNU, Lord of all things, denied the fact of the *theft*, and requested his mother to examine his mouth. She did so, and, to her utter astonishment, beheld *the whole universe in all its plenitude of magnificence.*

In another part of the same Dissertation, the President admits the important fact, that the name of CRISHNA, and the general outline of his story, were long anterior to the birth of our Saviour, and probably to the time of Homer; that though not absolutely born in a *stable*, he was *cradled among herdsmen*; that a tyrant, at the time of his birth, *ordered all new born males to be slain*; that he performed a number of astonishing miracles; that he saved multitudes, even in infancy, partly by his valour, and partly by his miraculous powers; that he *raised the dead*, by descending for that purpose to the lowest regions; that he preached very sublime doctrines, yet was the *meekest of human beings*, and condescended even to *wash the feet of his disciples.* All these, however, and many more noble actions of Crishna, which will be distinctly examined hereafter, were blended with others so extravagant, and even absurd, as to induce, in his mind, an opinion that the Indians had interpolated

his life with passages taken from the spurious gospels, which abounded in the first ages of Christianity, and might, through various channels, which it will be my province to point out, have found their way to India.*

Since the period (1784) in which the Dissertation just referred to was written, very rapid advances have been made by our countrymen in Indian science, and particularly in chronological science; and there is very abundant reason to doubt the high antiquity assigned by the learned author to the Bhagavat, and other Puranas.† However ancient, therefore, may be the *outline* of Crishna's romantic story, it can now be ascertained that those celebrated compositions are of a date very much inferior even to the Christian æra. Should that fact, however, not admit of absolute proof, a perusal of the numerous extracts from the EVANGELIUM INFANTIÆ, inserted in the course of this publicaion, will decidedly prove the fact of the interpolation alluded to, as far at least as those extracts are concerned, and the whole number of Apochryphal Gospels, amounting, according to Fabricius, to no less than THIRTY-NINE, the Brahmins had full scope for the exertion of those fraudful arts, which, as is evident in the recent case of Mr. Wilford, they still continue to practise. With the circumstance here alluded to, though well known to Oriental scholars,

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 274.

† My authorities for this assertion shall be adduced hereafter.

does him great honour; and his frankness in communicating the fact, as soon as he discovered the fraud, demonstrates him to be a man of strict integrity, and one who greatly prefers truth to any favourite hypothesis.

"Another imposition of a still more formidable kind, and connected with more important interests, has since come to light; and we have the misfortune to find, that the well-known passage in the 3d volume of those Researches, affirmed by Sir W. Jones to be an exact translation by himself, from an Indian MS. forwarded to him by Mr. Wilford, relative to Noah, under the name of *Satyavarman* and his three sons, *Sherma*, *Charma*, and *Jyapeti*, is also a forgery of the Brahmins. Though the sacred books by no means stood in need of this corroborative evidence of their authenticity, yet it was no small gratification to pious minds, to find its records thus decidedly confirmed by those of one of the most ancient nations of the earth. That evidence is now found to be baseless, and the Mosaic relation stands as before, secure in its own

struck, but felt some consolation, in knowing that still my manuscript was in my own possession. I recollected my essay on *Egypt*, and instantly referred to the orignals which I had quoted in it; my fears were but too soon realised, the same deception, the same erasures appeared to have pervaded *them*. I shall not trouble the Society with a description of what I felt, and of my distress at this discovery. My first step was to inform my friends of it, either verbally or by letters, that I might secure, at least, the credit of the first disclosure."

evidence; and the only result is, our being filled with indignation at the fraudful baseness of the sacerdotal tribe of India. By these repeated attempts, however, to impose on our countrymen, all dependence on their vaunted books is inevitably shaken to the foundation, and, after the most elaborate research into their ancient chronicles for historical truth, the exhausted student may too late find out that he has been labouring in vain."

The intelligence communicated through the same channel, the Asiatic Researches, concerning Salivahana, by Mr. Wilford, is taken from Sanscrit authorities, previously well authenticated, and is contained in an essay forming part of the third article in the ninth volume, and entitled

Vicramaditya and Salivahana.

The two grand civil æras of the Hindus are distinguished by the name of the two great personages above mentioned, Vicramaditya and Salivahana, or Salbahan; a circumstance which decisively marks the power and the eminence to which they were exalted in Hindostan. The former, according to Sir W. Jones, commenced fifty-six years *before* Christ; the latter, according to Mr. Wilford's own statement in the essay before us, seventy-eight years *after* Christ; the period of his death. The former was prince of Ugein, in Malva, highly renowned as a conqueror, as well as a patron of

arts and sciences, particularly astronomy, and so much in favour with INDRA, the Hindoo God of the firmament, that he obtained from that deity the singular boon, that his country should never be visited by drought. To enjoy this enviable blessing under a burning climate, during the life of a mere mortal, did not satisfy this great monarch; he wished to prolong his existence on earth to a far more extended period, and, by dint of fasting and prayer, obtained his wish of CALI-DEVI, or the goddess who presides over the cycles of TIME. The following passage records the fact, and at the same time introduces to us his young and predicted destroyer, SALIVAHANA.

"VICRAMADITYA made a desperate *tapasya*, in order to obtain power and a long life from CALI-DEVI, and as she seemingly continued deaf to his intreaties, he was going to cut off his own head, when she appeared, and granted him undisturbed sway over all the world for 1000 years, after which *a divine child, born of a virgin, and the son of the great* TACSHACA, *carpenter or artist, would deprive him both of his kingdom and of his life.* Such are the words of the *Vicrama-charitra*: and in the *Cumarica-c'handa* it is said, that this would happen in the year of the *Cali-yuga* 3101, answering to the *first of the Christian era.* Thus, VICRAMADITYA reigned for 1000 years nearly, unmolested, in the enjoyment of every rational pleasure, and never troubling himself about his latter end;

till, recollecting the *prophecies about this wonderful child*, and that the time for their being fulfilled was near at hand, he grew very uneasy, and sent people all over the world, *to find him out, that he might destroy him:* and having discovered the place of his abode, he advanced at the head of an immense army, but was defeated, and lost his life *by the hand of this divine child, who was then five years of age.*"*

Such, in a short compass, is the history of this wonderful child Salivahana; born in the first year *of the Christian æra*, and therefore coeval with its founder. There are, as usual, in these Indian historical details, several varieties of the story, which are detailed by Mr. Wilford; but this is the sum of them all: *A mighty and despotic monarch, destroyed by a divine child, born of a virgin, according to an ancient prediction, and that monarch frustrated in every scheme, to assassinate, in infancy, his predicted destroyer.*

In one of the varieties alluded to, extracted from another Indian legend, we are told that Vicramaditya, "toward the latter end of his reign, sent secret emissaries through all the world, to inquire whether a child were born of a virgin one year and a half old. The messengers returned to *Ujjayini* (Ujein) with the news, that a male child was born of a virgin, the daughter of a potmaker, begot by the king of snakes (called TACSHACA, or the Carpenter,

* Asiatic Researches Vol. ix. p. 118.

in the original,) while she was in her cradle. They informed him also, that this child, named Salavahana, had attained the age of five years; and that his grand-father had made numberless *clay figures of soldiers*, to amuse him."

Vicramarca marched at the head of an army; but the protecting snake came to the assistance of the child, and inspired *the figures of clay** with life, who started up as able warriors, attacked Vicramarca and his army, and defeated him. Salavahana cut off his head, and flung it into *Ujjayini*, that his death might be known to all the world. The queen was delivered, in that very month, of a male child; after which she burned herself with the head of her lord, who was re-united to the Supreme Being. Whilst the grandees of the state were assembled to place the child upon the Imperial throne, a voice from heaven declared, that, as the child was born after the death of his father, he could not succeed to the empire of *India*, but only to the throne of *Malwa;* and the same voice ordered the *Sinhavana*, or Imperial throne, to be buried in a secret place. Salavahana, who was a learned and pious man, became a *Muni*, and withdrew to desert places, to give himself up to devout contemplation †."

* The mention of these clay figures are thus noticed in italics, because they make a prominent figure in our future examination of the spurious gospels.

† Ibid, p. 121.

Muni means a religious devotee, and in retiring for a time to desert solitudes, he evidently copied the example of that great Christian prototype, of whom both Crishna and himself, are the degraded similitudes. From those deserts, however, he in due time emerged, to become the head of a great dynasty, that continued to flourish, as kings of Western India, down almost as low as the irruption of Mahmud of Gazna, in the beginning of the eleventh century. The race, or sect, of Salivahana was indeed not wholly extinct even when Timur invaded India, for that conqueror found, according to Sherif-edin, at Toglocpoor, a town to the north-west of Delhi, a tribe called SALWAN; and these, *on account of their religious tenets*, he ordered to be massacred, and their town to be burned. Salivahana, Mr. Wilford informs us, is generally pronounced SALWAN and SALBAN in the West. The above account of the massacre of the remainder of the SALBAN tribe, at Toglocpoor, and the reason assigned for that massacre, by the historian of Timur, viz. that they were *rigid Manichæans*, constitute a piece of information most important to the ends of this discussion. But it is now high time to close this protracted letter, and to renew the assurances of that profound respect, with which

I have the honour to be,

My Lords,

&c. &c. &c.

THOMAS MAURICE.

LETTER V.

My Lords,

Having now, I trust, satisfactorily proved to your Lordships, the wide diffusion of the grand primitive doctrine relative to a sacred character ordained to appear the deliverer of a guilty or fallen world (for the doctrine of THE FALL OF MAN from a state of primitive rectitude is evidently implied in the expectation of such a deliverer, and the firm belief of it in India is confirmed by that of the *Metempsychosis*, and of the innumerable and excruciating *penances* undergone by the religious of that country to regain *forfeited paradise*), I now proceed to consider by what means the knowledge of the Saviour of the world being actually born in Palestine, could reach so secluded a race as the Brahmins, and what authority there may exist (since Sir W. Jones's intimation is mere conjecture,) for the hypothesis that the leading facts in the lives of Crishna and Salivahana, were copied from the spurious gospels.

In the first place, it is highly probable that the tidings of the actual birth of the predicted Messiah, were, on their return, extensively propagated through the higher Asia by the favoured Magi, the neigh-

bours of the Brahmins in the Bactrian mountains, for the impression made upon those sages by the glorious scenes which they had witnessed, could never be effaced from their minds. But there were other sources of information, and other channels through which, if we are not wholly deluded by the historical accounts of those early times, the knowledge of the awful events so recently transacted in Palestine, could have arrived on the shores of India. These shall be enumerated in order.

SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE TRAVELS AND PREACHING OF ST. THOMAS IN INDIA.

ALTHOUGH I should be sorry to degrade these pages by introducing into them any of the legends of the Romish church, yet so much has been said by the Portuguese writers concerning the ancient Christians of St. Thomas, *the Apostle of the Indies*, as he is generally denominated by them, that it would be inexcusable, on a subject like the present, wholly to omit mentioning what is recorded concerning himself and his peregrinations, by those writers, principally from Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, and in the celebrated book entitled the "Acts of St. Thomas"—a work edited also by Fabricius, and to be found in the second volume of the Apocryphal Gospels. On that historical legend, however, not to place too confident a reliance, from the ancient traditions of the church, and the testimony of the fathers, sufficient evidence

may be collected to convince us, that, on the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the Gentile world, in which they were respectively to exercise their ministry, the vast district of Parthia, and the more eastern empires of Asia, were allotted to St. Thomas; and this apostle, who, by the condescension of his crucified Master, had such decided and public proof permitted him of that resurrection which is the basis of the Christian hope of immortality, was, doubtless, proportionably animated by it to tempt every danger of a fiery climate and barbarous nations, and propagate its doctrines to the farthest bounds of the habitable globe. The Medes, the Persians, the Carmanians, and the inhabitants of Hyrcania and of Bactria, whose capital was Balkh, the ancient residence of the Magi, of which provinces, at that time, the Parthian empire consisted, successively shared the benefit of his instructions. The Eastern traditions add, that, in this quarter of Asia, he met, far advanced in the vale of years, with those venerable Magi who had visited the Saviour of the World in Bethlehem; that he admitted them, by baptism, into the pale of the Christian church; and experienced from them essential services during his abode in that part of Asia. As there is no gross improbability in this story, and as the idea is withal highly gratifying to the mind of the Christian, it ought not to be hastily rejected, though recorded by the unknown author of the Imperfect Commentary

upon St. Matthew, a work of considerable antiquity.*

From Parthia—not I think as the Acts of this Apostle state, from Aden, in Arabia, a statement more likely to be true of the second St. Thomas, or Mar-Thome, the Manichæan heretic of the third century, than the great apostle himself—from the Bactrian sages, the undaunted servant of Christ, is said to have visited India, already, as we have seen, by the doctrine of its *Avatars*, prepared to receive with benignity the herald of the *true* Messiah, though not to renounce its absurd superstitions in honour of Crishna, the pretended Saviour. This ever has been, and probably ever will continue to be, the unfortunate case; for, since the Indians allow that all religions come from God, and that all modes of adoring him, when springing from an upright heart, are acceptable to him: or, to use their own remarkable language on this point, since they affirm that the Supreme Being "is sometimes employed with the attendant at the mosque, in counting the sacred beads; and sometimes in the temple, *at the adoration of idols;* the intimate of the Mussulman, and the friend of the Hindoo: the companion of the Christian, and the confident of the Jew;"† since they are firmly of opinion, "that the

* Opus Imperfectum in Matth. homil. ii. written about A. D. 56.

† See the Preliminary Discourse of the Brahmins who translated the Code of Gentoo Laws, p. 4. 4to. edit. 1776.

Deity *has appeared* innumerable times, and by innumerable Avatars, in many parts, not only of this world, but of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and that both Christians and Hindoos adore the *same God*, under *different forms*;† since they indulge, I say, such latudinarian ideas in theological concerns, it was equally impossible for St. Thomas, as it has been for any modern missionary since, to persuade the *great body of the people of Hindostan* to renounce the errors of idolatry, and become sincere converts to the truth of uncorrupted Christianity. A considerable number of Hindoos, however, (as may be gathered from all the accounts of this apostle's life given us by the ancients, and confirmed by the diligent inquiries of the moderns) were absolutely converted to the Christian faith; and the Brahmins themselves, though determined not to give up their usurped authority over the minds of the people, and the vast emoluments, resulting from the idolatrous rites celebrated in the pagodas, yet, at the same time, comparing the accounts of the Magi, and the doctrines preached by our apostle, with their own Scriptures, discovered that strong resemblance, between some parts of the character and history of the Christian and Hindoo Deliverer, as seemed completely to verify the ancient traditions of their nation, and induced them to *interpolate* their sacred books with extracts from the Gospels, of which, at that early period, the spurious

* Asiat, Researches, vol. i. p. 274.

abounded more than the genuine throughout the East.

In this place it should by no means be omitted, that the very Gospel of the Infancy was originally known in Asia under the title of the *Gospel of St. Thomas*, by which name it is often mentioned, and condemned by the fathers as a gross forgery, unworthy of his name and character. The number of the spurious Gospels of which we have any knowledge, as before intimated from Fabricius, amounts to no less than THIRTY-NINE; of which, those that have descended down to our own time will be found in that writer's often-cited work, the Codex Apocryphus. It is happy for us that they *have* so descended, since we are by this means enabled to detect imposition, and vindicate the authority and dignity of the genuine productions of the Evangelists. There might also be another powerful motive with the Brahmins for making the asserted interpolations; for, though the zealous disciple of Christ, and his doctrines, so congenial with many of the sublimer dogmas of their own religious faith, might be welcomed on his first arrival, yet, the number of proselytes daily and prodigiously increasing, they might be alarmed lest the total downfall of their superstition, and the absolute loss of their enormous gains from the practice of it, should be the fatal consequence. We are justified in this conjecture by the accounts given in Maffæus's Indian History,*

* Maffæi Hist. Ind. lib. ii. p. 85.

and in the ancient martyrologies of his death, which is said to have happened after the following manner.

This holy man, pursuing the successful career of his spiritual embassy, continued his progress, probably by the route of the Indus, from the northern to the southern regions of India, where he gained still greater fame and more numerous disciples. At Cranganor, then said to have been the capital of a kingdom of the same name, but now a miserable town and fort on the Malabar coast, after converting its king, Basdeo, (written in the Acts of St. Thomas above cited, MESDEUS), and his son Zuzan,* he instituted that order of Christians who so long boasted his name. These, though, in succeeding ages, deeply infected with dangerous errors, principally of the Nestorian sect, have flourished, in a continued series, from the time of their great founder, and boast still to retain the records of their institution, and an original grant of land to their patron, St. Thomas, from the reigning king of India, sufficient for the erection of a church, engraved on tablets of brass. These tablets, for some centuries, were lost; but, during the vice-royalty of Don Alfonsa Sousa, one of the early governors of the Portuguese India, were dug up. The apostle of the Indies having established this Christian colony at Cranganor, and, if his biographers may be credited, having visited, and sown

* Acts of St. Thomas, apud Fabricium. Vol. ii. p. 713. idem edit.

the seeds of the Gospel in, the great island of Taprobane, sailed eastward even to China itself, and laid the foundation in that empire of its triumph in future ages; a triumph, which would appear incredible, if not attested by such authentic writers as the Arabian Travellers in the ninth, and Marco Paulo in the thirteenth, century.* From China, our apostle returned to India, and settled at Meliapoor, upon the opposite shore of the peninsula, under the protection of a certain king, on the coast of Coromandel, named Sagamo, who had been converted by his miracles. The Brahmins, however, growing jealous of him, and dreading his superior influence over the mind of that prince, resolved to put him to death; and, pursuing him out of the city to a tomb, at which he used occasionally to retire and perform his devotions, transfixed him with lances while fervently engaged in prayer.

From this fatal event, Meliapoor is said to have taken the appellative of the murdered saint, having been since generally known by the name of San Thome; and a considerable eminence near the city, whither he was pursued by the vindictive Brahmins, and where his tomb and a magnificent church were afterwards erected by the Christians of his order, is called the Mount of St. Thomas.

* See a Dissertation, by M. Renaudot, on the Origin of the Christian Religion in China, added to his Ancient Accounts of India and China, by two Mohammedan Travellers, in the Ninth Century, p. 76.

Their brethren of the Malabar coast were anciently accustomed to undertake toilsome and dangerous pilgrimages to this spot, though at the distance of 400 leagues, across the peninsula, to worship the sacred relics (his bones, a miraculous cross stained with his blood, and the lance that occasioned his death), which are asserted by the missionaries to have been found on this mountain, and deposited in the chapel of this the then metropolitan church of India. Meliapoor is recorded to have been, in former times, the capital of the kingdom of Coromandel, and the great emporium of commerce on this coast. Whether this be true or not, it is certain that its name of San Thome is of very ancient date, having been known by this denomination when the two Mohammedan travellers visited India nearly ten centuries ago.

I shall conclude this account of the travels of St. Thomas, with the statement of the respectable M. Renaudot, who observes, "Although this tradition" (of St. Thomas's preaching and death at Meliapoor) "is not altogether certain, it nevertheless carries some air of authority with it; inasmuch as the name of San Thome, which is imposed on the city of Meliapoor, has, for many ages past, been known not only among Europeans, but also among the Arabs, both Christian and Mohammedan; for, our two authors speak of Betuma, or Batuma, as of a place known upon the Indian shores; and this word signifies the same

with Beit-Thomas, the *house* or *church* of St. Thomas, just as the Arabs and Syrians write and pronounce Bazbadi for Beitzabdi, Bagarmi for Beitgarme, and the like."* Such are the accounts, partly traditional, and partly historical, that have been handed down to us from ancient writers concerning the preaching, travels, and death of the *first great Apostle of the Indies*; accounts, to which every one will give that proportion of credit which he may think due to the reporters; who are, some of the fathers, the ancient martyrologists, and the Portuguese historians, Osorius, Maffæus, and the author of the Portuguese Asia.

THE VAST TRAFFIC AT THAT TIME CARRIED ON WITH INDIA BY MERCHANTS, BY SEA, FROM ALEXANDRIA, THE COASTS OF ARABIA, SYRIA, AND MAGNA GRÆCIA, AND, BY LAND, FROM ALL THE GREAT CAPITALS IN THE INTERIOR OF ASIA, AFFORDED EXTENSIVE OPPORTUNITY OF IMPORTING INTO THAT COUNTRY AN EARLY KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY.

There is no occasion, however, to rest the argument in favour of the conversion of a large portion of the Indian nation, in the earliest periods of Christianity, solely on the mission of St. Thomas. The apostles and their disciples were zealously and

* See Ancient Accounts of India and China, p. 80.

successfully employed in propagating its sublime and pure doctrines in every quarter of Asia. The capitals of Persia, Arabia, and Syria, with which countries India at that time kept up a vigorous commerce, were crowded with its votaries; and the Indian merchants, as well as the YOGEES, who were then in the practice of undertaking long pilgrimages to the remotest parts of Asia, in order to explore the sacred fountains and flaming springs of naphtha dispersed through the Higher Asia, and the objects of veneration to their ancestors, could not fail, in their conversations and intercourse with foreigners, of becoming acquainted with the principles of a religion which, in many respects, was so similar to their own, or of bringing back with them the various Gospels, genuine and apocryphal, diffused in such numbers through Asia.

At that time, also, a constant correspondence, maintained, for above three hundred years from the time of Alexander, with the Greeks, who had settled in multitudes, under the Seleucidæ, in Persia, and the Greek princes of Bactria, must have prevented the Indians from being entire strangers to the Greek language, in which, for the most part, those Gospels were written: or, if they were wholly so, there remained the Syriac, and, in particular, the Persian, (the ancient Persian, spoken about that time, of which we have before been told, by the greatest linguist that ever lived, that *six or seven words in ten were pure Sanscreet,*) as the certain media of

informing the Indians concerning the history of the birth, actions, and death, of our Saviour. There cannot be a more direct proof how generally and how early the religion of Christ was diffused throughout Persia, than that, upon its ruins, arose, towards the end of the third century, the impious and widely-extended heresy of Manes, which was compounded of the ancient Zoroastrian or Magian superstition, and certain perverted doctrines of Christianity; for, that impostor had the policy to propagate the notion of an immediate relation of the Character of Christ to the mediatorial Mithras of the ancient Persians, declaring him to be the presiding genius over the visible world, and his throne to have been, from eternal ages, in the SUN; from which orb, his luminous shrine, he descended in person, to instruct and reform mankind, and to which, at the termination of his mission from the Good Principle, he returned; blasphemously giving out, at the same time, that he himself was the promised *Paraclete*. The Evangelium Infantiæ has been assigned to the fertile invention of this heresiarch; but, however vitiated his doctrines by its contents, that circumstance is impossible, since Manes did not appear on the theatre of Asia till the year 277, and Irenæus, as we have before observed, had already anathematized that production in the middle of the second century, with all the train of Gnostic errors which the Manichæans, in the third century, so zealously adopted.

Alexandria, too, it should be remembered, at that time the grand emporium of all the commerce carried on between the eastern and western world; Alexandria, partly reclaimed from paganism by the labours of St. Mark, recorded, by the church, to have suffered martyrdom there; was, on account of its celebrated library and noble college, instituted by the munificence of the Ptolemys, crowded with learned men from every quarter of the civilized globe; and Egypt, or the exterior *Cusha-Dweepa*, being not beyond the limits forbidden by their supreme legislator to be passed, was then probably much more the resort of Hindoos than in later periods, when there existed no government sufficiently liberal to *tolerate*, and, at the same time, sufficiently powerful to *protect*, foreigners of different religious habits from those of the country. These, hearing of a miraculous Child, the Saviour of the World, who, in his infancy, had run the same risk of destruction with their favourite divinity CRISHNA; —to the truth of which then recent fact, Egypt itself, and the great city of Hermopolis, where the idols fell down, as Dagon of old before the ark, at his august presence, could bear ample testimony—these, comparing their doctrines and characters, and at the same time calmly reflecting on the firmness of the dying martyr, ST. MARK, who, before their eyes, sealed, with his blood, the truth of the doctrines which he had taught the Alexandrians; these Indian merchants, I say, must have received, and doubt-

less retained, when returned to their own country, the most lively impressions of the new religion.

Various others, among the disciples of the apostles, ardent to propagate the faith of Jesus, by means of the Roman fleets, which then annually visited India by the route of Alexandria and the Arabian Gulph, might also be instrumental in planting that faith upon its shores; and that the Indians were not ignorant of what passed at Rome, and the western parts of their empire, is evident, from the two embassies dispatched, the one shortly after the other, by Porus to Augustus, in the nineteenth year before Christ, in order to solicit his friendship and an alliance with the Roman empire. What was most remarkable in the latter of these embassies, next to the extraordinary presents (intended, it should seem, rather to terrify than to conciliate the emperor) and the veteran herald Zarmanochagas, was the epistle, written, upon vellum, in the *Greek language*, and asserting his dominion over six hundred feudal princes of India;* which strongly confirms our former conjecture, that the Indians were not wholly unacquainted with the dialect of Greece. Pliny has also recorded a third embassy, sent, about the middle of the first century, to the Emperor Claudius, from the king of Taprobane, then the mart of a most flourishing trade, carried on with Alexandria on the

* Strabo, lib. xv. p. 789.

one hand, and the two coasts of the Indian peninsula on the other.*

Thus, my Lords, having extensively explored the numerous and varied channels of conveyance by which both the *genuine* and the *Apocryphal* Gospels might, in the very earliest periods of Christianity, have reached the Indian shores, I shall proceed in my next letter to the more important point of demonstrating, from internal testimony, *ample*, *evident*, and *irresistible*, contained in books deemed sacred by the brahmins, that they had not only seen those Gospels, but shamelessly borrowed the most striking and interesting facts recorded in them, for the purpose of illustrating their own fanciful mythology and fabulous deities. In my investigation I shall advance cautiously, but firmly; and shall open such a scene of unprincipled spoliation and plagiarism, as, I am confident, was never before exhibited in the history of any country or people existing.

With profound respect,

I have the honour to be,

My Lords,

&c. &c. &c.

THOMAS MAURICE.

* Plinii. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 22.

LETTER VI.

My Lords,

However ancient, in India, the original legend concerning Crishna, in whatever remote periods was conceived the outline of his story—I must again beg leave to repeat, on the authority of Mr. Bentley, on the antiquity of the astronomy and other sciences of the Hindoos in the sixth volume of Asiatic Researches, and even of Mr. Wilford himself, in the tenth volume, that the Bhagavat is a composition *comparatively modern.** The Evangelium Infantiæ, with which, in many parts, it so intimately coincides, is generally thought to have been the production either of Manes himself, or some disciple of that heresiarch who flourished towards the close of the third century. I am happy, however, in having met with incontrovertible evidence, that this famous gospel was in public circulation about the middle of the second century, for it is expressly alluded to by Irenæus, in his book Adv. Hæres. lib. i. cap. 17, who flourished at that period, having been born in A. D. 120, so that it might have reached India, and the Bhagavat have been composed, with those interpolations in the original legend, in the very first

* Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 574, and x. p. 43. The passages shall be given at length hereafter.

century of the Christian æra. I consider this discovery of scarcely less importance, on account of the latitude which it affords us in point of time, than the information that the Bhagavat itself is of a date posterior to the Christian æra. The entire passage from Irenæus will, hereafter, be submitted to your Lordships, when I come more particularly to consider the *spurious* gospels, and the falsehoods contained in them. Our more immediate business is with the

IMITATIONS OF THE GENUINE GOSPELS, TO BE MET WITH IN THE BHAGAVAT.

PREVIOUSLY, however, to our advancing a step farther in this investigation, it is necessary to repeat an observation made in another place, that between the names of Crishna and Christ, there never existed the least affinity, except in sound: CRISHNA being a Sanscreet word literally signifying *black*, or *dark blue*, an appellative given, on account of his colour, to the incarnate deity of India; and CHRISTOS, I scarcely need add, being a Greek word, meaning *anointed*, in allusion to the kingly office of the Hebrew Messiah. Thus the Nile, in consequence of the dark appearance of its waters, is in Sanscrit books frequently denominated the CRISHNA; and this suggestion of M. Volney is hence proved, like many others, to be utterly unfounded. To return to the Bhagavat.

In this celebrated purana there are many passages

so entirely congenial in sentiment with those which particularly distinguish the sublime Christian code of theology from all others, that either the Evangelists *must* have seen and copied the *purana*, (a supposition equally absurd and impious!) or the brahmins *must* have read, or heard read, and copied the productions of the inspired penmen. I shall here present your Lordships with a few of these parallel passages, or at least of doctrines and sentiments strikingly resembling each other.

The beginning is so uniformly consonant, except in *one circumstance*, with the relation of the birth and early incidents in the life of Christ as detailed in St. Matthew's Gospel, that it is scarcely necessary to point out particular instances. The whole Indian relation, in fact, appears to be a gross plagiarism from the Christian, but concealed under an allegorical garb. The circumstance omitted, is that Crishna, though an AVATAR, and, consequently of heavenly descent, is not said to have been *born of a virgin*, but of human parents, in the natural way. However, the brahmins afterwards made up for the omission, since BUDDHA, the avatar next in succession, *was* born in this supernatural manner. Instead, therefore, of selecting particular passages, I shall here, principally for the benefit of those who may not be possessed of the published copy of the Museum manuscript, insert an abridgment of the initial sections, in which, with due allowance for the

usual embellishments of an Indian history, the resemblance will be clearly traced.

Mathura, seated on the river Jumna, was once the capital of a great empire, and had, for its sovereign, a prince named CANSA, a merciless tyrant, the son of Ogur Sein, whom he had deposed, and on whose usurped throne he reigned. Cansa, young himself, had a sister much younger, who, when arrived at a proper age, he bestowed in marriage on a Brahmin of royal descent, and eminent for his piety, whose residence was at Gokul, a city situated three cose higher on the other side of the Jumna. On their return from celebrating the nuptials, he heard a voice, saying, "Cansa, beware! the eighth son of Devaci will be your destroyer." Cansa was exceedingly alarmed at this intelligence: he let fall the reins on the neck of the horses, and, seizing Devaci by the hair of her head with one hand, drew his sword with the other with intent to cut it off, when Vasudeva represented to him that a woman was not liable to be killed for any crime, particularly as she was his own sister. After much expostulation, Vasudeva promised, and solemnly engaged, to give up to Cansa *all the children* whom Devaci should bring forth, which he might have liberty to destroy for his own security. Cansa at length consented that she should live, and went directly to his palace, giving orders to keep Vasudeva and Devaci *in strict confinement*.

Devaci, in the course of as many years, had eight children, seven sons and one daughter. As soon as the first was born, Vasudeva himself carried it to Cansa; who, satisfied with the offer, and reflecting that it would be equally useless and unjust to destroy the first male for the sake of the eighth, returned it to Vasudeva, who joyfully bore it away, though not without suspicion that the tyrant would alter his mind. At the same time the prophet Nared came to Cansa, and thus addressed him: "why do you slumber over your own destruction? the child now dismissed perhaps may be your destroyer." Nared then went away; and Cansa, redemanding the child, instantly put it to death, in spite of the remonstrances of Ogur Sein, his mother, and the surrounding nobles. He even threw his own father into prison for opposing him, and doubled his vigilance over Vasudeva and Devaci; ordering them both into still closer confinement in the inmost apartment of a prison, *only accessible through seven iron doors.* In process of time Cansa, in the same manner, destroyed six of Devaci's children.

The seventh, Chrishna's elder brother, and partner of his glory in this avatar, RAMA, escaped death by a method revealed to his parents from heaven.

After some time, Devaci again grew pregnant, and, by the blessing of heaven on this pregnancy, her beauty suddenly shone forth with such transcendant splendour, that Vasudeva, her husband's countenance itself became bright, and the very wall

of her chamber was illuminated. Shortly after, Brahma and Mahadeva, *with a chorus of other Devatas*, came thither, and *celebrating with songs* the praises of Vasudeva and Devaci, exclaimed, "*In the delivery of this favoured woman, all nature shall have cause to exult;* how ardently do we long to behold that face for the sake of which we have coursed round the three worlds." Cansa, on these auspicious signs of the pregnancy of Devaci, the report of which spread instantly through the palace, and, hearing at the same time that the faces of the father and mother were suddenly become so transcendantly bright, imagined, for a certainty, that this was the child that should slay him, and consulted with his wisest counsellors, whether he should not at once destroy Devaci; but, again reflecting that it was on all accounts, horrible to kill a pregnant woman, he contented himself with the fixed determination to devote the child to death the instant it should be born. The tyrant of Mathura, however, was continually haunted with the idea of the *eighth son*,* his fated

* Baldæus, from other sources of intelligence on the Malabar-coast where he resided, makes Crishna the *seventh* son of this marriage; but, as Feizi, the brother of Akber's secretarp, translated the Bhagavat into Persian immediately from the Sanscreet, which he learnt by being educated under a Brahmin; the above account, of the *eighth* son being the destroyer of Cansa, is more likely to be the true one. "Upon this occasion," says Baldæas, "I cannot but observe, that this, as well as the ensuing part of the story of *Kisna*, (Crishna,) seems to have a near relation to the history of the birth of our

destroyer; and the avenger of his crimes appeared ever in his view.

At length, in the month Bhadron, at deep midnight, on the eighth of that month, on a Wednesday, *at a time when the world was distracted with tumult and contention*, in the house of Vasudeva, *appeared* the miraculous child, the celestial phænomenon, conspicuous with eight arms. The moment Vasudeva saw the infant, his eyes were opened, he knew it to be the Almighty, and Devaci and himself immediately began their devout addresses. After some time thus employed, the Creator of the world again closed the eyes of Vasudeva's and Devaci's understanding, and they again *thought* that a child was born unto them. A divine voice now directed Vasudeva to carry the new born infant to Gokul, where YASODHA, the wife of *Nanda the herdsman*, had just been delivered of a daughter, and to substitute the one child for the other.

Vasudeva immediately felt his chains miraculously loosened, and, taking up the child in his arms, hurried with it through all the doors, the guards being buried in profound sleep. When he came to the Jumna, the waters immediately rose up to kiss the child's feet, and then respectfully retired on each side to make way for its transportation. Vasudeva with the utmost speed proceeded in th execution of his commision, and reaching the hous of Nanda, punctually fulfilled all that he was enjoined. Yasodha,

Saviour, his flight into Egypt, the murder of the innocent children by Herod, Christ's miracles and ascension, &c."

in fact, knew not that she had been delivered of a daughter; for, the interposing deity had brought forgetfulness on her, and, when, Vasudeva was gone, she took the child he had left for her son. On Vasudeva's return to the banks of the Jumna the waters miraculously divided as before, he once more passed dry-shod to the opposite shore, and, the moment he reached the chamber of his prison, the chains again came upon his feet and hands, the locks became all closed, the guards awakened, and all heard the child cry; on which, they hastened to give notice to Cansa, who immediately ran, undressed as he was, to the prison, where Devaci, with both hands, trembling, presented to him her infant. Cansa received it with a frowning and terrific countenance, and was going to dash it against the stones, when the child suddenly darted from his hands, and mounted up into the air, bedecked with all the splendid ornaments and numerous arms of a Devata, exclaiming in a loud voice, as in a flash of lightning she departed, "O Cansa, the punishment you merit in attempting my destruction awaits yourself; be assured that your destroyer also *is already born.*" Cansa was appalled, and trembled exceedingly at beholding this miracle. After a variety of bitter and painful reflections on the instability of human affairs, he determined to release Vasudeva and Devaci, from confinement, and thus terminated the events of that wonderful night!

The next morning at sun-rise Cansa summoned

a council to know what was to be done in this moment of dreadful emergency. It was resolved, that since he was now certain by the Devata's threat that his destroyer was already born, he should cause *all the young children throughout his kingdom to be slain.* It was also resolved, that soldiers should be employed in the strictest search after the concealed enemy, and *that very day the cruel orders were issued.*

In this place, I scarcely need bring to the reader's recollection, the guilt and persecuting fury of *the tyrant Herod,* the *flight into Egypt,* to avoid the effects of that fury, *the murder of the innocents,* the *heavenly chorus* that sang HALLELUJAH, the *astonished shepherds,* &c. &c. In succeeding pages, when examining the imitations of the spurious gospels, we shall also find many other resembling circumstances enumerated, which are here omitted. We now proceed to notice other passages strikingly similar either in fact, or in sentiment, between the Bhagavat and the evangelists.

I am still firmly of opinion, and that opinion is corroborated by the whole train of previous narration and argument, that the great battle recorded in the Bhagavat, between Crishna and the serpent Calyja, or Calli-Naga, from (CALLI *black,* and NAGA, of kin to NACHASH *serpent,* a proof how the Indians interpreted that disputed word), has a direct allusion to that more important predicted contest between the Promised Seed, and the dire adver-

sary of the human race. It is considered in India, as by much the most momentous of all Crishna's earthly exploits, and all the circumstances previous and subsequent to it, prove the superior magnitude of its interest among them. The monster's infectious breath had poisoned the whole current of the Jumna; all who drank of its waters, herds and herdsmen, instantly fell down dead, and the sublimest effort of a deity was exerted, before the contest began, that of *restoring the dead to life*—a God is here properly introduced, because dignus vindice nodus, and the description throughout abounds with expressions that mark the conqueror, as invested with all the attributes of a deity. Let the reader judge for himself.

"An infinite variety of these adventures caused the name of Crishna to be venerated by the good, and terrible to the wicked. Monsters in nature, and monsters out of nature were perpetually conjured up to attack the DIVINE INFANT, who, with ease, discomfited them all, and gained new glory from every fresh combat. At length the great envenomed serpent CALLI NAGA determined to try his strength with him, and, with his enormous bulk, took possession of the river Jumna, in whose bed he lay concealed, and whose stream he poisoned. The instant that the cattle tasted the water, they *fell down dead* on the banks, and the cow-boys going in the evening to bathe in the river, as soon as they were immersed and their lips touched the flood, they also

expired. Crishna, being informed of this dreadful calamity, immediately hastened down to the river side, and, *by his omniscient power*, soon discovered the cause. As his former companions lay dead in multitudes around him, he was filled with compassion at their untimely fate, and, *casting upon them an eye of divine mercy*, they immediately arose, and with looks of astonishment, inquired what disaster had befallen them, and what enchantment had deprived them of their senses and recollection."*

The combat was long and sanguinary, for we are told that "the serpent vomited streams of fire from his mouth and nostrils, *aimed at once a thousand bites with his thousand heads, and twisted his enormous folds round Crishna's whole body*." On seeing this, the resuscitated cow-boys fell prostrate in despair. Balhadur, however, consoled them, by assuring them that Crishna would overcome this *the greatest of all dangers* with the same ease as he had overcome others. Crishna, at length, to relieve their anxiety, *took hold of the serpent's heads one after another; and, tearing them from his body*, SET HIS FOOT ON THEM, *and began to dance in triumph on each of them*.†

With respect to the engraved figures allusive to this great event, copied from Sonnerat, a highly respectable writer, in the last volume of the Ancient

* See the History of Crishna, translated from the Bhagavat, in Ancient India, vol. i. p. 335.

† P. 337.

India, one of which represents Crishna dancing on the *crushed head* of the serpent, and the other the same personage entangled in its enormous folds, to mark the arduousness of the contest, while the enraged reptile is seen *biting his foot.*—With respect to those figures, I say, they may be correct representations or not; but the great fact remains recorded in indelible characters, both in the histories and emblematical designs of India. Sonnerat, however, it is more than probable, would not have insulted the *Court of France*, at whose expense he travelled in India, to make accurate observations and collect genuine illustrations of the theology, natural history, and commerce of the inhabitants, by exhibiting in his costly volumes engravings of objects of doubtful authority.

CRISHNA RESTORES THE TWO SONS OF HIS TUTOR TO LIFE.

Crishna, having learned the whole circle of the sciences, *in one day and night*, of his tutor Sendeepen, bids him demand what he wished for most, as his tutor's fee. Sendeepen begged leave to consult his wife before he determined on his request. The wife entreated, that, if it were possible to raise *her two sons to life*, that might be the boon bestowed. Sendeepen accordingly requested of Crishna to restore his two dead sons. Crishna said it should be done; and then, with Ram, descending to the abode of Dherme Rajah, the Indian Pluto, he there

sounded the sacred shell. Dherme Rajah immediately appeared, and, making most profound submissions, entreated to know his commands. Crishna demanded the two sons of his tutor Sendeepen; and, by this authoritative mandate, *these two young men became alive again*, and Dherme Rajah presented them to Crishna, who, with Ram, immediately took them to the delighted Sendeepen. At a future period of his life Crishna also raises the *six sons* of Devaci to life; but the examples of his supernatural power in this way are too numerous to be inserted.

HE IS SWALLOWED BY A VAST FISH.

At page 331, Crishna, like Jonas, the prototype of our Saviour, is swallowed by a huge fish, a Ditya in disguise, but is vomited up again. Here is the story, new modelled, and decked out with Indian embellishments.

"One day Pek Assoor, sent by Cansa to destroy him, came to Mathura, and, sitting on the bank of the Jumna, waited for Crishna's coming, to swallow him up like a fish. The herdsmen coming thither, found this Assoor, like a huge alligator, lying on the river's side, and told Crishna; who, on seeing it, knew it to be Pek Assoor, and not a fish. Immediately on his coming near, the alligator seized him with his jaws, and swallowed him, rejoicing that now he had accomplished the ardent desire of his sovereign. But Crishna began to burn the entrails of

the finny monster, so that he had no power to retain his prey, *but threw up Crishna again from his mouth.*

Another day, as Yasodha was fondling and kissing her infant, he opened his mouth, and she saw therein the heavens and the earth, the sun and moon, sea and land, the mountains and valleys of the whole world. This wonderful story, hinted at before, occurs twice in the life of Crishna.

CRISHNA ELEVATES A MOUNTAIN.

At page 343 occurs the stupendous miracle so pointedly alluded to, above, by Sir W. Jones. Eendra, the Hindoo God of the firmament, having grown jealous of Crishna's power, then an infant only seven years old, and doubtfull also of his divinity, summoning before him the guardian spirit of rain, ordered him to let loose the floods "that were reserved for the *day of judgment*, and to send such a storm for seven days and nights successively, that all the men and beasts of the place should be drowned; but to take care that it did not rain in any other part. Accordingly on the same instant began a most violent storm of rain, falling in vast torrents, with hail like large stones, and most terrific thunder. The herdsmen, in agony, called on Crishna, who desired them all to get on the mountain Goverdhana, and take refuge in a cave there, with their cattle and effects: which they did. *Crishna then lifted up the mountain on his little*

finger, with as much ease as if it had been a lotos, and held it above the storm; so that the inhabitants were perfectly secure. Eendra, finding his anger took no effect, at length discovered, to his infinite shame and mortification, that *Crishna was the Almighty*, and that he had been utterly deceived in supposing him a human creature. So he caused the storm to cease, not without violent apprehensions on his own account. Crishna, when the rain was over, *restored the mountain to its place.*"

The whole of this romantic story is probably founded on that passage in Mark ii. ver. 23, concerning the possibility *of removing mountains by the power of faith.*

CRISHNA'S OMNIPRESENCE.

At page 355, we find the following beautiful allegory and remark, illustrative of the *omnipresence* of that deity, of whom Crishna was the imagined representative. Akroor, bathing in the Jumna, to his surprise beheld Crishna under the water: in a moment after, lifting up his head, he found him still on the bank where he had left him. Again he plunged, and again he beheld the very same august person both in the water and on the bank. Astonishment seized him, and a kind of holy horror thrilled through his veins: he plunged several times more, but always the same objects presented themselves to his sight, till at last he knew not which was the real Crishna, that without or that within the

water. At length, looking more stedfastly at the latter, he beheld innumerable Devatas standing with their hands joined before that form in the water, in praise and adoration. "Oh! supreme Lord!" he then exclaimed, "thy essence is inscrutable, but its shadow is in all bodies, just like the images of the sun in vases of water: if the vases be broken, where is the image? and yet that image neither is increased nor diminished by the fracture of the vessels. In this manner *thou art all in all.*"

HIS OMNISCIENCE.

His *omniscience* is also as strongly inculcated in the next page; for Crishna asking him why he had so often looked towards him and then plunged again under the water, and why he seemed so amazed? "O Natha! sovereign Lord," he replied, "thou well knowest what I have seen in the water. Thy power fascinates all the world, and exhibits fictitious appearances every where, which mislead and blind the understanding. Ask me not the wonders I have beholden, but pity me, *and take me, miserable as I am, under thine Almighty protection.*"

On an occasion that seemed to imply ignorance, or forgetfulness, of passing events in the incarnate deity of India, it is observed in the Bhagavat: "This mistake, indeed, is not reconcilable with Crishna's OMNISCIENCE, but *it is a mark of his taking on himself the exact state of human life, that such forgetfulness should occupy his mind.*"

CRISHNA RESTORES TWO CRIPPLES TO SANITY AND BEAUTY.

At page 359 Crishna restores to her strength, and endows with exquisite beauty, a poor deformed but pious *cripple* called Koobeja, bending beneath infirmity and age, who, in return, makes offerings to him of sandal and flowers, and on his return from the destruction of Cansa magnificently entertains him. Let this account be compared with *that of the woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could not lift up herself.* Luke xxiii. v. 11. and the imitation will be too obvious to admit of the smallest doubt.

We read in Mark xiv. v. 3. that as *Jesus sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster box of spikenard very precious, and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.* This act has, also, its parallel, if it be not *a variety* of the preceding miracle, in the Indian legend, as given by Baldæus, apud Harris, for there are different lives of Crishna in different parts of India; but they are all *forgeries* from the genuine or spurious gospels. "Crishna having advanced a little farther, they met a poor cripple, or lame woman, having a vessel filled with spices, sweet-scented oils, sandal-wood, saffron, civet, and other perfumes. Crishna making a halt, she made a certain sign with her finger, steeped in the aromatic oil, upon his forehead, pouring the rest upon his head. Crishna asking her what

it was she would request of him, the woman replied, Nothing but the use of my limbs. Crishna, then, setting his foot upon hers, and taking her by the hand, raised her from the ground, and not only restored her limbs, but also renewed her age, so that, instead of a wrinkled faded skin, she obtained a fresh and fair one in an instant. At her request, Crishna and his company lodged the following night at her house."*

CRISHNA'S MEEKNESS, AND WASHING THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES.

At p. 418, at the approach of the venerable brahmin Nared, Crishna, beholding him at a distance, "immediately rising from his musnud, went to meet him, *laid his head at Nared's feet*, and welcomed him. Nared was ashamed of so great an honour, and made an apologizing speech. Crishna then *washed Nared's feet, and poured that water on his own head*; after which he seated Nared in the place of honour, paid him homage, and made the mistress of the house do the same. Nared, in a transport of wonder and delight, exclaimed, "O Natha! no one can fathom thy mercy and benevolence! thy Avatar is for the purpose of protecting the good and punishing the wicked. If it be thy august will to perform services to Nared, it is as a father and mother perform services for their children, out of their own voluntary affection and

* Baldæus apud Harris, vol. i. p. 96.

good-will. Men, who are submerged in the abyss of their passions, have no possibility of escaping from their control, *except by thy mercy, in being born again in this transient world.*"

Again, at p. 454, Akroor, on approaching Crishna is said to have felt a "paroxysm of agitation, and, at last, falling at his feet, with tears in his eyes, announced his name. Both Crishna and Ram, knowing that he was of the elder branch of the Yadava family, would not suffer his prostrations, but lifted him up, and gave him a most cordial reception, and led him into the house; there they *washed his feet*, and then set victuals before him."

CRISHNA LIBERATES THE OPPRESSED RAJAHS; FORGIVES SINS; HIS NAME THE PARDONER.

At page 432, a number of imprisoned and oppressed rajahs send the following address to Crishna: "*O Thou, who givest kings their thrones*, I come, an ambassador from those wretched state-prisoners; who, having heard of thy glory both on sea and land, have sent me to thy august presence to sue for protection. Therefore, *O thou destroyer of the unjust!* forget not us miserable captives, but free us from the chains of the tyrant. Man is stricken by outward circumstances, and, mistaking *evil* for *good*, becomes forgetful of THEE; but he who knows and remembers THEE *is free from all error.* We, too, ignorant and short-sighted mortals, knew

not thy truth, but thought Jarasandha, the chief and head of the kingdoms of the earth; but now we are better acquainted with thy mighty and miraculous acts, and that thou wert born in the world to protect the good and punish the wicked. Our faults and crimes doubtless are many, but look not on them while we are under misfortune, *consider thy own name, which is* THE PARDONER!"

Crishna, who came on purpose to relieve the oppressed, readily granted their request; and the description of his entrance into the Indian capital, though not immediately relative to religion, unless it be contrasted with *Christ's entering into Jerusalem amidst the Hosanna's* of surrounding multitudes, is too striking to be omitted. Here, however, instead of *branches of trees being cut down and strewed before him, flowers* are presented to him, *odoriferous woods* are burned, and *whole trees* erected to shade and refresh him. "Crishna set forth in all pomp and splendor from Dwaraka, preceded, and followed, by music and singing. Every inhabitant of Hastanapoor, male and female, rejoiced at his arrival, and crowded the roofs, windows, and doors, to see him enter, and had bedecked all their houses for the triumph. Great crowds stood in the road to receive him, and the women presented him with flowers of five colours as he passed. All the streets were cleansed from dirt and dust, and sprinkled with perfumed water. The bazars and squares were all new beautified with

golden plaster, and odoriferous woods were burning in all the houses. The brilliant jewels which adorned the doors of the Pandoos shone like lamps, as if they had been placed there for the purpose of shedding their combined lustre on Crishna. The women all praised and envied the happiness of the eight Nayega, and *flocked round Crishna in adoring multitudes*." P. 423.

Again on his entering into Mathura, the honoured city of his nativity, it is related: "Early in the morning Crishna looked towards the city, and there beheld it as a castle built of pure chrystal, the lofty doors formed of unwrought gold, jewels of the purest water engraved upon those doors, and the windows made of rubies and diamonds. Round the fortification was a deep ditch, and the suburbs were all filled with rows of warehouses, and innumerable parrots were perched on the domes and in the galleries, while thousands of majestic peacocks displayed their proud plumage at the doors, and enamoured doves were seen joyfully cooing with their delighted mates. The bazars and squares were free from dust and dirt, and the reflection from the walls, from the polish of the white stone, shone brilliantly upon the walls opposite. All the people at Mathura, who had before heard the wonders of Crishna, stood waiting to see him *with flowers* and other presents; and, when Crishna moved forwards into the city, they had *set up trees of Kepeeleb* before all the doors. The women left

their work unfinished to run and gaze upon him, while Crishna went on smiling and looking with ineffable sweetness." p. 435.

When, by the destruction of the tyrant Jarasandha, he had liberated these unfortunate princes, "Crishna expressed himself perfectly satisfied with their repentance from the errors of their former pride before their misfortunes, assuring them that he had more regard for those who *turned their minds towards him after wicked conduct, than even for devotees and penitents who had passed their whole lives in prayer and austerity.*"* p. 437.

CRISHNA'S PATIENT FORBEARANCE, AND REMARKABLE FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

RAM, Crishna's half brother, having in a passion struck off the head of SOOTE, is thus rebuked by the assembled Brahmins: "Ask of Crishna, thy younger brother, whether, *when Bhreegoo, the Reyshee, struck him with his foot, he did not (instead of resenting it) tenderly inspect his (Bhreegoo's) foot, lest perhaps he might have hurt it by the blow.*" p. 445.

This passage I accompanied with the following

* This must be numbered among the more marked imitations of the *genuine Gospel;* for, it contaius a sentiment not congenial with the theological code of the Brahmins; in which, although repentance *can* obtain heaven, the most brilliant rewards are assigned to *persevering austerity.*

remark: This sentiment, which occurs frequently in the Bhagavat, is far too *Christian* to be put into the mouth of the choleric Brahmin, who, we have seen, is constantly cursing his enemies.

The story itself occurs towards the close of his life, and was intended as an answer to a question debated by the Reyshees, which of the three Indian deities was most worthy to be worshipped. "Bhreegoo said he would try all the THREE, and then inform them. In consequence, he went first to Brahma, and addressed him with the salutations proper from a son to his father,* to see what kind of temper and patience he possessed. Brahma at first grew angry, and accused him of want of ceremony, but was soon appeased; and his son perceived he was like fire and water, alternately hot and cold. Bhreegoo, in the second place, went to Mahadeva's abode: Mahadeva rose up, and was going to embrace him, but Bhreegoo would not let him approach, and made use of very disrespectful language. Mahadeva drew himself up in wrath, and, snatching up his trident, rushed forward with intent to kill him; but Parvati interfered, and, falling at her husband's feet, pacified his anger. Bhreegoo hastily retreating thence, went to the place called Vaicontha, the lord of which is Veeshnu. Him he found sleeping on the lap of the universe, or Leckshmeen. Bhreegoo, on seeing

† Bhreegoo was one of the sons of Brahma, and the promulger of the Vedas.

him, struck him forcibly with his foot on the breast. Veeshnu started up, and, taking hold of the foot, said, "*This breast of mine is extremely hard, and your foot very tender; undoubtedly it must be much hurt.*" With these and other kind words, mollifying his wrath, he intreated Bhreegoo to stay a little time, and honour his abode with his presence, adding, that he was sorry he had been taken unawares from being ignorant of his approach, entreated his pardon, and *hoped his foot would not be injured by so violent a blow.* Bhreegoo, weeping for joy at this kind reception, went away, exclaiming, "*This surely is the* TRUE LORD *of the three worlds!*" p. 454.

CRISHNA NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

"Soodaman, a poor brahmin, and fellow-student with Crishna under his tutor Sendeepen, about this time paid a visit of respect to Crishna at Dwaraka, having nothing with him for a present *except one handful of rice.* Crishna received him most affectionately, and, in his absence, transformed his cottage to a palace, and his wife to a beauty; gave him a large sum in money, and, at his death, rendered him beatified."

Similar to this is the following beautiful allegory: "Distinctly to mark the *equal regard* with which the Deity observes all his devout worshippers of every rank and class, Crishna one morning set out with a great suite of Devatas for TIRHUT, for the

express purpose of exhibiting the marks of his divine favour to Bhoolamen, the rajah of that place, and also to one Mhooret-Deva, a poor Brahmin inhabitant of the same city, both of whom were his most zealous devotees. When he arrived there, knowing that their faith and religious merits were equal, although their station and circumstances were widely different, he was solicitous not to appear to give the one a preference above the other, nor let either feel himself slighted. He, therefore, made a double representation of himself, *both Avatars exactly similar*, so that the rajah, who received him with all the pomp and splendor of royalty, and with magnificent presents of exquisite clothes, chains, and strings of pearls, &c. conceived *himself* the most favoured of mortals, in having the divine personage under his own roof; while the humble Brahmin, no less overjoyed, was laying his unaffected offerings of the choicest fruits and strings of sweet flowers before the very same Crishna at the same moment in his own house. Crishna, at the earnest instances of the rajah, stayed some time with him in his magnificent palace to fortify his devotion, and all the inhabitants of Tirhut were eased of their doubts and perplexities by his presence: at the same time he was daily present in the lowly cottage of Mhooret-Deva, receiving grateful prayers and thanksgivings, with the greatest condescension and benevolence. After some time thus employed, Crishna returned to Dwaraka, and the

Brahmin accompanied him a considerable way on his journey." p. 451.

In exact conformity to the above sentiments, at page 389, in a style very much resembling the sacred text, Crishna declares: "He who gives up his mind to me, and seeks no other support, *I am his* POSSESSION *and* TREASURE."

CRISHNA'S AMOURS WITH THE GOPIAS TO BE CONSIDERED OF A SPIRITUAL NATURE.

SIR W. JONES has remarked that, "though *pure* and *chaste* in reality, yet Crishna exhibited an appearance of excessive libertinism, and had wives or mistresses too numerous to be counted." His wives, in fact, were eight, and his mistresses no less than sixteen thousand in number; but the expressions of ardent affection that occur in the Bhagavat are evidently of an allegorical nature, have reference to the union of *soul* rather than of the *body;* and, possibly, may all be founded on a perversion of those passages of scripture, which represent Christ, *as the bridegroom of the church.* Indeed, that these amours of Crishna are to be understood in a spiritual and mystical sense, is demonstrated by a passage occurring in the early pages of this history, where it is expressly affirmed that Crishna's enjoyment with the Gopias, and the Gopias with Crishna, *is a* MYSTERY, *and cannot be described.*" p. 349.

* Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 274.

The whole life of Crishna, I must repeat, appears to me to be written in the very same spirit with the mystic poetry of Hafez, the devout sensualist of Persia, in which the mind, wrought up to a high degree of enthusiasm, seeks, in the most delightful terrestrial objects, images by which to represent the Deity himself, and to express the raptures of religion. For instance, Hafez frequently uses the romantic phrase, *the wine of devotion,* and speaks of the happiness arising from the love of his Maker with the same transport, and nearly in the same language as he talks of the *fruition of his mistress.* However this mode of expression may shock the feelings of European divines, it is but too prevalent among Asiatic theologians, whose devotion seems to want the assistance of external objects to animate and invigorate it.

All of these distinguished females had support and separate palaces in Duaraca, and with each of them the enamoured God was at all times personally present. These palaces, in the same vein of oriental allegory, are said to have been erected "on pillars of coral, and the courts and serais to have been embellished with jewels; canopies of cloth of gold were every where suspended with valuable strings of the finest pearl; beautiful children were playing in the courts; while charming slave girls were diligently attending their several mistresses. The peacocks on the house-tops were rejoicing and singing amid the odorous exhalations, which arose from the con-

stant burning of aromatics, in such quantity, as to form a cloud that resembled the rainy season; and numberless rubies that were distributed about the buildings preserved a constant light over the place."

It is worthy of remark that these sixteen thousand mistresses of Crishna declare that, "though they were not HOURIS, they were desirous, at least, to be his slaves." p. 499. The occurrence of the word HOURI, were there not reason to suppose it inserted by the Persian translator, would alone stamp the Bhagavat as a production posterior to the time of Mahommed. At page 416, the zennardars, addressing the offended Ram, as God, exclaim: "Oh Bhagavat, we ignorant and sinful men have offended thee, and *thy* ANGER *was but* MERCY, *which gave us an occasion of beholding thy power.*"

HIS DESCENT TO HADES.

CRISHNA'S descent to the regions of the dead, in order to recover the deceased son of a brahmin, is thus wildly but impressively described.

"So Crishna and Arjoon mounted a carriage together, and went towards the west, and, passing all the seven climates, and all the stages of the universe, came to that profound and palpable darkness, where there is no admission of the sun, or the moon, or fire. As they had now no other means of proceeding, Soodharsan-Chakra (the celestial thunderbolt), was ordered to go forward, that the horses

might get on by means of its light. When Arjoon beheld that light, *which is the light of God*, he could not turn his face towards it; but, covering his eyes, to preserve them from the dazzling glare, remained in deep and awful reflection. When the intense brightness of that light overcame them, they entered an expanse of water, where a cold wind reigned. Within that they observed a splendid palace and throne, whereon sate Seshanaga, the deity with a thousand heads, and who seemed in magnitude to resemble Kylass, while his thousand eyes shot terrific flames. There they beheld the *Being undescribable, who is pure and all sufficient.* His countenance was like the flower of the lotos, and he wore a yellow robe on his body, and golden ear-rings, and a profusion of jewels; a string of the finest pearls adorned his neck, and the Kowsteke-men blazed on the middle of his breast, a figure of beautiful proportions, and resplendent with all the ensigns of a deity. That sublime Being, which was purity itself, spoke these words: "It was I, who, taking on myself the form of Yama, bore away the Brahmin's son, because I had an earnest desire to see you. You have done what was your function to do, and have released the earth, overladen with her heavy weight. Your incarnation was for the purpose of illuminating the darkness of the world: both of you are Avatars of Narayen, and have well performed your appointed functions." On beholding these wonders, Arjoon

totally forgot every thing that had passed in his mind, and now fully comprehended that Crishna was Lord of heaven and earth, and that *all that he saw was* HIS FORM *and* HIS LIGHT. They then took the Brahmin's son away with them, and came back. Arjoon, astonished and amazed, totally laid aside his former presumption, and felt both Crishna's might and his own weakness. The Brahmin, in great joy, received back his son, praising them for the miracles they had wrought, and the toils they had undergone." p. 457.

HIS DISAPPEARANCE AND ASCENT TO HEAVEN.

AFTER a life thus spent in doing good, Crishna at length DISAPPEARS from earth, and the event is described in a paragraph affording evident proof that the Brahmins, as well in this instance as that of the WHITE HORSE in the CALCI, or final Avatar, were no strangers to the APOCALYPSE.

" One day, in Dwaraka, which is a second Vaicontha, Crishna was enjoying himself with his relations, and sons, and grand-children, and his sixteen thousand wives, and all his wealth: his elephants, his horses, his carriages out of number, were arranged in order. In the midst of his golden castle extended his apartments on all the four sides. His gardens were of golden earth, wherein were trees of paradise full of variegated fruits. Peacocks, and cocelas (Indian nightingales), and other birds, were sporting therein. Crishna on that day was sur-

rounded with his sixteen thousand wives, AS LIGHTNING WITH A CLOUD, and they gathered innumerable flowers as offerings to Crishna, like the Devatas presenting flowers to Eendra; and, in all the license of joy, they and Crishna were sporting together, and throwing the flowers at each other. In the garden was a river, whose banks were all gold and jewels, the water of which, from the reflection of rubies, appeared *red*, though perfectly *white;* it was the WATER OF LIFE: and thousands of lotoses floated on its surface, among which innumerable bees were humming and seeking their food. In this river they bathed and played, Crishna always in the midst of them. At length, in the very height of all their revels and enjoyments, he suddenly DISAPPEARED"!!!

In the Mahabbarat his *death* is mentioned, and is said to have been occasioned by an arrow from the bow of a huntsman that pierced *his heel.* When his spirit departed, we are informed, "so great a light proceeded from him, that it enveloped the whole compass of the earth, and illuminated all the expanse of heaven. At that instant, an innumerable tribe of Devatas, and other celestial beings, of all ranks and denominations, came to meet Crishna; and he, luminous as on that night when he was born in the house of Vasudeva, by that same light pursued his journey between heaven and earth to the bright Vaicontha, or paradise, whence he had descended. All this assemblage of beings, who had

come to meet Crishna, exerted the utmost of their power to laud and glorify him."

Such, my Lords, is the account of the miraculous feats as detailed in the Bhagavat, of this wonderful child of Oriental fancy, CRISHNA; such is the series of parallel facts and passages so strikingly consonant, in many respects, with those recorded of our Saviour in the genuine gospels, that every mind capable of a moment's reflection, *must* consider the former as imitations of the latter. I repeat the word *must*, because we know that the humble and illiterate disciples of Jesus were utterly unacquainted with the sciences and history of India, only at this day beginning to be known; and that the Evangelists, *ignorant even of the Greek and Roman classics*, COULD NEVER HAVE SEEN THE SANSCRIT BOOKS, OR COPIED THE BHAGAVAT OF THE SUBLIME VYASA.

With this conviction firmly impressed on my own mind, I shall, in my next address to your Lordships, proceed to lay bare the forgeries of the *spurious* gospels, when the point under consideration cannot fail of being still more strongly, if not irrefragably proved.

I have the honour to be,

With profound respect,

My Lords,

&c. &c. &c.

THOMAS MAURICE.

LETTER VII.

MY LORDS,

AFTER the extensive display of fraud and forgery exhibited in the preceding letters, to be followed up, in the present, by the disclosure of a still darker train of falsehoods, accumulated in the *spurious gospels*, it becomes necessary to prove to the Right Reverend Body whom I have the honour of addressing, that the suspicions repeatedly intimated above, concerning the *comparatively modern age* of the Bhagavat (*however ancient might have been the original legend*) are founded in truth and justice. In evidence of the assertion thus hazarded, I produce, in the first place, Mr. Wilford himself, who, discoursing on this subject, uses the following very remarkable expressions: "The Hindus having once fixed the accomplishment of these prophecies to a period greatly anterior to the Christian æra, every thing in their books was either framed, or *new modelled* accordingly, and particularly in the PURANAS, EVERY ONE OF WHICH IS GREATLY POSTERIOR TO OUR ÆRA, though many legends, and the materials in general, certainly *existed before* in some other shape."*

* Asiatic Researches, vol. x. p. 35.

I produce, secondly, Mr. Bentley, who states the age of the Surya Siddhanta, the oldest astronomical treatise extant in India, and formerly vaunted to be 2000 years old, as only about 700 years. His argument appears to be unanswerable. "That system, or Calpa, which is contained in the Surya Siddhanta, is expressly called *the Calpa of Varaha*, who flourished about the year 1021 of Salivahana. Therefore any Hindu work in which the name of Varaha or his system is mentioned, must evidently be modern; and this circumstance alone totally destroys the pretended antiquity of many of THE PURANAS and other books, which, through the artifices of the BRAHMINICAL TRIBE, have been hitherto deemed the most ancient in existence."*

With these remarkable concessions before us, from men well able to judge, from their acquaintance with the Sanscrit idiom, what Indian compositions are of *ancient*, and what of *recent* fabrication, our path throughout the remainder of this mighty labyrinth will be clear and unperplexed.

CONCERNING THE SPURIOUS GOSPELS, AND IMITATIONS OF THOSE GOSPELS.

How early after the death of Christ the affectionate zeal of his disciples induced them to compose histories of his remarkable sayings and acts, while sojourning upon earth, is evident from the initial

* Asiatic Researches, vol. vi. p. 574.

verses of St. Luke's Gospel, where he tells us that, *many had taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things* of which himself and the other apostles were eye-witnesses; and as these writers had probably mingled with their accounts many extravagant and puerile fables, he, on that account, in all likelihood, was induced to commence his own more authentic narrative. In this passage the apostle probably alluded to the gospels of the Egyptians and Nazarenes, supposed to have been the first of the spurious gospels composed, but which are not now extant.

The terms *spurious* and *apocryphal* were applied to those productions, because they contained things unworthy of the divine character of him whose wonderous deeds they professed to detail, among a great variety of authentic facts, recorded in the *genuine* gospels, which circumstance rendered them the more dangerous. They were, in fact, innumerable, increasing as sects and heretical opinions multiplied; the compilations of converted Jews, and judaizing Christians, Valentinians, Gnostics, Manichæans, and Nestorians, in support of the different doctrines maintained by them. One of the most ancient and celebrated of these efforts of pious fraud was the often-mentioned EVANGELIUM INFANTIÆ, or *Gospel of the infancy of our blessed Saviour*, a production probably of the first ages of Christianity, because expressly alluded to by Ire-

næus,* who flourished in the second century as one among that infinite number *ἀποκρύφων και νόθων γραφῶν*, which had already appeared to perplex the true believer; and we are certain of that allusion by his mentioning so particularly the ridiculous story inserted, with some little variation, as may be seen in the note†, in the 48th and 49th sections, as they stand in the edition of Thomas Sike, Utrecht, 1697, relative to the infant Christ's learning the Hebrew alphabet, who, being desired by his master, Zacchæus, to repeat after him Aleph, he did so, and, to his astonishment, went correctly through the whole alphabet, explaining the mystic meaning of each character to the utter astonishment of Zacchæus, who exclaimed to Mary, "Filio huic tuo nullâ doctrinâ opus est."

* Irenæus, adversus Hæreses, &c. lib. i. cap. 17, p. 104, edit. folio, 1596.

† The entire passage, in Irenæus, is as follows, which the learned reader will please to compare with what occurs in the preceding pages, and it may possibly solicit his attention in subsequent ones.

Προς δε τουτοις αμυθητον πληθος αποκρυφων και ροθων γραφων, ας αυτοι επλασαν παρεισφερουσιν εις καταπληξιν των ανοητων, και τα της αληθειας μη επισταμενων γραμματα. Προσπαραλαμβανουσι δε εις τουτο κἀκεινο το ραδιουργημα, ως του Κυριου τα δια του διδασκαλου αυτω φησαντος, καθως εθος εστιν, ειπε αλφα, αποκρινασθαι το αλφα· παλιν τι το βητα του διδασκαλου κελευσαντος ειπειν, αποκρινασθαι τον Κυριον, Συ μοι προτερον ειπε τι εστι το αλφα, και τοτε σοι ερω τι εστι το βητα. Και τουτο εξηγουνται ως αυτου μονου το αγνωστον επισταμενου, ὁ εφανερωσε εν τω τυπω του αλφα. ibid.

A story very nearly resembling the above (for we must not expect to find the similitude *exact*, which could not fail of discovering to us the *theft*), occurs in the life of Crishna, so often alluded to, for Vasudeva having found a complete tutor, named SENDEEPEN, for his supposed son, and his brother Rama, we are informed that he placed them under their care. "Although, says the history, to save appearances, they staid some time in Avengtee as his pupils, yet, in fact, *Crishna learned all the sciences in one day and night, and perfectly knew all the sixty-four Kela*, to the great joy and equal astonishment of Sendeepen, who had been used to see his pupils employ months and years upon only one book."*

Thus, in the very first instance cited, we have not only proof of the high antiquity of the spurious gospel in question, but very direct evidence of its contents being transplanted into the Indian purana, in whatever age that composition was fabricated.

There is one summary and decisive argument against the veracity of all the species of gospels under consideration, which are stuffed with romantic accounts of imaginary miracles said to have been performed by Christ *in his infancy*, whereas it is not apparent from any passage in the genuine gospels, that he performed any miracles in infancy; but the direct contrary may be collected from that text of St. John, cap. ii. v. 2. *This* BEGINNING *of* MIRACLES *did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and mani-*

* Ancient India, vol. ii. p. 379.

fested forth his glory, and his disciples believed in him; that is on account of this very *manifestation of his glory,* and the confirmation of his public ministry by a stupendous miracle. From this decisive text, as well as from the ridiculous and absurd nature of the miracles thus recorded, we may fairly conclude in the words of an old commentator on this text, MENDAX IGITUR EST LIBER DE INFANTIÆ SALVATORIS. This fact premised, and kept still in our view, we may safely proceed to notice such other miraculous deeds imputed to that Saviour in the Evangelium Infantiæ as may tend to illustrate the subject under discussion, of which the ultimate object is to detect imposture, and vindicate the honour of the true Messiah.

Of these, not the least degrading to his character is that recorded of him in the very first chapter of the EVANGELIUM, where Jesus is represented as *speaking even in his cradle:* affirmatur Jesum locutum esse, et quidem cum *in cunis jaceret* dixisse matri suæ Mariæ, ego sum Jesus, filius Dei, VERBUM illum quod peperisti, quemadmodum annunciavit angelus tibi Gabriel, misitque me Pater meus ad salutem Mundi.* Consonant to this we read in the life of Crishna: " Soon after Crishna's mother was delivered of him, and while she was weeping over him and lamenting his unhappy destiny, the com-

* Vide Codex Apocryph. vol. i. p. 168, cura Fabricii edit. 1703, and Life of Crishna, in Ancient India, vol. ii. p. 3 4.

passionate infant assumed the power of speech, and soothed and comforted his afflicted parent. Then, speaking to his father, Carry me, says he, to Gokul, on the other side of the river Jumna, to the Brahmin Nanda, whose wife having been lately delivered of a daughter, exchange *me* for *her*, and leave the rest to my disposal."

Considering the striking similarity in many respects already intimated, between the history of Christ and Crishna, it may seem rather singular that Crishna, though *cradled among herds and herdsmen*, as we have seen, should not be born in a *stable*. It happens, by a rather singular deviation, in this respect, from recorded fact, that in the spurious gospel Christ is not said to have been born in the stable of an inn, or, according to St. Luke's information, to have reposed his head in a manger, but merely in a subterraneous abode, or cave. If the manger had been mentioned in the Gnostic gospel, it would doubtless have been found in the Indian production. Thus the former runs, "Cumque ad *speluncam* pervenissent, fassa est Maria Josepho, instare sibi tempus pariendi, neque se posse in urbem proficisci, sed hanc, inquit, *speluncam* intremus." Cap. 2.

Again, when Crishna was born, we have seen, the father's face became illumined, and the whole room was filled with the irradiations of divine glory. In perfect consonance with all this, we read in the apocryphal gospel: "Et ecce! repleta illa erat (spelunca) luminibus, lucernarum et candelarum

fulgorem excedentibus; et solari luce majoribus." Cap. 3.

I have ventured an opinion, in a note at page 34, that, in all probability, the Arabic edition of the Evangelium Infantiæ was the perverted medium through which Mohammed or his coadjutors, for he himself is said to have been neither able to read or write*), obtained information concerning our Saviour and his doctrines. In support of that opinion, two strong attesting facts shall now be produced.

In the Koran, where that impostor is speaking of the birth of Christ, whom he always mentions respectfully, as a sublime prophet, though he denies his divinity, he puts these words into the mouth of Zachariah, when predicting the future greatness of the Messiah:—"While he is yet in the cradle, and in swaddling clothes, he shall have the use of speech."† As the impostor could find nothing of the kind in St. Matthew, he undoubtedly derived his information from the spurious Gospel above mentioned, which, at that time, was extant in Greek and Arabic. Mr. Sale, the learned editor of the Koran, in fact, makes the following observation on this very passage. "The reported sayings of the infant Jesus seem all to be taken from some fabulous traditions of the eastern Christians, one of which is preserved to us in the spurious Gospel of the *Infancy of Christ*, where we read that Jesus *spoke*

* Consult the Preface to Sale's Koran, p. 2.

† Sale's Koran, vol. ii. p. 63. 8vo. edit. 1765.

while yet in the cradle, and said to his mother, *Verily I am* JESUS, *the Son of God, the Word which thou hast brought forth, as the Angel Gabriel did declare unto thee: and my father hath sent me to save the world.*" Some of these ridiculous legends even go so far as to make the infant Jesus speak in the womb, and upbraid Joseph with his suspicions of the chastity of his wife. How widely different is all this from the temperate and dignified narration of the true Gospel! that Gospel which is almost totally silent in regard to the *infancy of Christ*, and only details those sublime exertions of his supernatural power which were necessary to demonstrate his divinity to mankind, and hold up to posterity the example of those benevolent virtues which it is the principal object of Christianity to inculcate!

In another note of Sale's on the same book, we are informed, from a similar source, that the prophet Zacharias, who is said, in the Koran, to have had the charge of Mary, during the infancy of her pregnancy with the immaculate Child, that this holy man, at that time officiating-priest at the altar, suffered nobody but himself to go into her chamber, or supply her with food, and that he always locked *seven doors* upon her. Notwithstanding this precaution, he constantly found a plentiful table spread before her, of *summer-fruits in winter, and winter-fruits in summer.** But it is not on account of the

* Sale's Koran, vol. i. in the notes, p. 61.

fruits, thus miraculously brought the virgin, that I cite this passage, but because we have already seen, that, in perfect unison with the spurious gospel, the chamber in which the mother of Crishna was confined, was only to be approached through *seven strong doors of iron.**

Soon after the birth of Crishna, the holy Σοφος, or Indian prophet Nared, hearing of the fame of the infant Crishna, pays a visit to his supposed father and mother at Gokul, examines the *stars*, consults the *horoscope*, inspects his *hand*, (for, the Indian in the most ancient periods, practised the art of chiromancy,) and declares him to be of celestial descent; all which has every appearance of being a direct imitation of the account, in sacred story, of the astronomical magi (who at that ancient period were always astrologers), observing the STAR, and visiting and adoring the infant Saviour in Bethlehem.

In the Bhagavat we read that Crishna coming home one day, found his mother busy in putting some pearls on a string. He asked her from what tree she had gathered them; but, she answering that she never knew pearls to grow on trees, but only in oyster-shells, Crishna took one of the biggest, which he had no sooner put in the ground, but they saw a pearl-tree sprout forth full of the most exquisite pearls. The mother standing amazed, and ready to worship him, he caused the tree to vanish immediately. p. 301. To this story, also,

* See above, p. 83.

some kind of parallel may be found in the Evangelium Infantiæ; for, the infant Jesus being at play with other Hebrew children, after a violent rain, amused himself with checking the current of the waters with *the boughs of a tree*. One of his companions, seeing this, ill naturedly removed those boughs; upon which, Jesus sternly reprimanded him in these terms:—*Ecce jam tu quoque tanquam arbor arescas, nec afferas folia neque ramos, neque fructum. Et illico totus aridus, factus est.* At the entreaty of his parents, he afterwards restored the youth to soundness, all but one hand, as an example of terror to others. In the Bhagavat, the reader will find strong traits of this story in two beautiful youths, whom the curse of a Brahmin had turned into trees, but whom the touch of Crishna restores to their former shape. p. 304.

These, and a variety of similar tales, related in the apocryphal gospels, and in the life of Crishna, formed principally on the basis of those gospels, are, in all probability, nothing more than mutilations of that portion of Holy Writ which represents *the barren fig-tree as withered from the roots* at the command of its creator. Mark ii. v. 14.

It has already been observed, that Mathura, on the Jumna, was the city in which Crishna was born, where his most extraordinary miracles were performed, and which continues at this day the place where his name and Avatar are holden in the most sacred veneration of any province in Hindostan.

These circumstances deserve particular notice; because, the Arabic edition of the Evangelium Infantiæ records MATAREA, near Hermopolis, in Egypt, to have been the place where the infant Saviour resided during his absence from the land of Judæa, and until Herod died. At this place, Jesus is reported to have wrought many miracles; and, among others, to have produced, in that arid region, a fountain of fresh water, the only one in Egypt, *Hinc ad Sycomorum illam digressi sunt, quæ hodie* MATAREA *vocatur; et produxit Dominus Jesus fontem in Matarea, in quo Diva Maria* (Crishna's mother has also the epithet *Deva* prefixed to her name) *tunicam ejus lavit. Ex sudore autem, qui a Domino Jesu ibi defluxit, balsamum in illa regione provenit.**

The town of MATAREA still remains, with the name not in the least altered, being, at this day, called MATAREA. Mr. Savary, who visited the spot in 1777, gives the following account of it. "At a little distance from Heliopolis, is the small village of MATAREA; so called, because it has a fresh water spring, the only one in Egypt; a tradition has rendered it famous, which says, that the Holy Family, flying from Herod, came hither; and that the Virgin bathed the Holy Child, Jesus, in this fountain. The Christians relate many miracles performed here, and come with great devotion to

* Evangelium Infantiæ, p. 71.

† Savary's Travels in Egypt, vol. i. p. 126.

drink its waters, for the cure of their diseases. The very Mohammedans partake of their veneration." He adds, that, within the memory of man, the balsam-plant was much cultivated in its neighbourhood; but that through the despotism of the Arabs, and the convulsions of Egypt, the cultivation of that precious shrub is no longer attended to in the country. Now, though it would be contrary to historical evidence to assert the whole story relative to Crishna and his adventures at Mathura, to have been a romance, founded on what is recorded in this Apocryphal Gospel concerning Christ and the Holy Family at Matarea, we may rest assured, that the similarity of name and incidents did not operate a little towards inciting them to make the interpolations contended for.

"At a certain time," says the history of our Indian deity, "Crishna taking a walk with the other cowherds, they chose him their king, and every one had his place assigned him under the new king." And in the Evangelium Infantiæ, we read, *Mense autem* Adar *congregavit Jesus pueros, eosque tanquam* REX *disposuit. Straverant enim vestes suas in terra, ut super illas consideret, et coronam, e floribus consertam capiti ejus imposuerant.* Cap. 41.

Whence comes it, on this occasion, we may fairly ask, that Crishna, *the real nephew of a king*, in youth is made the humble attendant upon flocks, and the companion of cow boys; whence but that in scripture his great exemplar, Christ, is so re-

peatedly called the *Good Shepherd*, and those whom he came to save the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. In fact, at page 123 of the Arabic edition of the spurious Gospel, the infant Jesus, soaring beyond the limits of allegory, and declaring himself to be the *good Shepherd*, turns all his young companions into *actual sheep*; but, afterwards, at the solicitation of their parents, restores them to their proper form.

There is, as might be expected, at cap. 42, of this far-famed legend, a prolix relation, too long to be here wholly inserted, respecting a boy bitten by a serpent, who was brought to Jesus to be cured: Et cum ad dominum Jesum pervenissent, rogabat ille, quare hunc puerum gestarent? Atque illis respondentibus, quod serpens ipsum momordisset; dicebat Dominus Jesus pueris, *Ite nobiscum ut serpentem istum interficiamus*. The serpent was, in consequence, not only compelled by his powerful antagonist to suck the poison out of the boy's wound, but Jesus *curst the snrpent*, so that he instantly burst asunder and died. In just the same manner is the serpent, while contending with Crishna, and incircling him in his enormous folds, destroyed, by Crishna's making himself so large *as to burst the enraged reptile asunder:* after which the victor exultingly tramples upon his thousand heads. These accounts may be called excessive exaggerations, but they mark through all antiquity the firm belief of the fact, and the wide diffusion of the doctrine.

It is remarkable, that one of the first miracles performed by Crishna, when mature, was the curing of a leper; it is remarkable, I say, because, curing the leprosy is the first miracle recorded of Christ by St. Matthew, with whose Gospel the Evangelium Infantiæ seems to be particularly connected. A passionate Brahmin having received a slight insult from a certain rajah, on going out of his doors, uttered this curse.—That he should, from head to foot, be covered with boils and the leprosy; which being fulfilled in an instant upon the unfortunate king, he prayed to Crishna to deliver him from his malady, and was eventually cured.

In the numerous extracts given above, the miraculous feats of Crishna are principally alluded to, because the date of that Avatar's incarnation, as before remarked, if the records of India may be credited, goes back to an æra of above a thousand years before Christ, whereas the birth of Salivahana, confessedly took place in the same year in which Christ was born; and the difficulty in the latter case, although the assumption of divine privileges is in some respects bolder, is consequently not so great as in the former. In fact, his history seems to have been founded, principally, on the basis of the Manichæan legends: notwithstanding that circumstance, it is also deeply connected with many of the facts recorded in the genuine gospels; and the tale, disgustingly repeated, at second hand, neither excites our wonder, nor gratifies our

curiosity. Mr. Wilford thinks him altogether an imaginary character, an ÆRA, a CYCLE; yet afterwards, rather inconsistently, informs us that the remains of *his* dynasty continued to flourish, in the province of Delhi, till the latter end of the twelfth century.* In another place he observes: "even in the time of Jaya-chandra, the last emperor of India, (whose death took place A. D. 1194), we find a SALBAHAN king of Delhi; and in the district of Bhadaon, in that province, there is a small town, the capital of a pergunnah of the same name, called COTE-SALBAHAN, or the fort of Salbahan, and said to have been built by him."†

Whatever share imagination, joined with pious fraud, may have had in compiling the history of Salivahana, certainly his character is not wholly *ideal*: and I shall now produce the passage before alluded to, from the history of Timur, by Sheriffedin, his Persian biographer, to prove that so late as the close of the fourteenth century, the remains of the Salbahan race existed in western India. "On the 23d December (A. D. 1398), after a march of six miles, the army encamped at Toglocpoor, the inhabitants of which town were *of a particular religion*. They believed that the whole universe was governed by two beings, the first of which is called ORMUZD, the second AHRIMAN, that is, *light* and *darkness*:‡"

* Asiatic Researches, vol. ix. p. 216.

† Ibid, p. 131.

‡ Life of Timur, vol. ii. p. 49.

these are the two well-known Persian principles on which the heresies of Manes had been engrafted. Their religion being contrary to Timur's, who was then making war on the Guebres, or Parsees, they were slaughtered without mercy, and their town set on fire.

Mr. Wilford's conjecture, in a subsequent page, that Salivahana was MANES himself, disguised under that appellation, is far more probable; that MANES, whose religious code, combining the splendid superstition of the ancient magi with the Christian doctrines, could not fail of making the deepest impression on the neighbouring race of *fire-worshippers* of India. However different in purity of doctrine; however humble and unadorned the Christian religion itself; arrayed in the Manichæan grandeur it fascinated the half idolatrous Indian multitude, and Manes became invested with honours which he never merited. The Hindus, Mr. Wilford elsewhere observes, "are fond of *forms* and *emanations*, which they consider to be the same with the original from which those emanations sprang, and disciples are very often venerated as so many forms of their masters. It is then very possible that they should have considered the apostle and disciple, who first preached the gospel in India, *as a form of Christ, or even as Christ himself, after several centuries had elapsed;*"* and, in fact, the profound veneration which the Manichæans, in particular, are said to have ever enter-

* Vol. x. p. 121.

tained for the symbol of the CROSS, renders this supposition still more probable.

To India, as well as to Tartary, and other regions of the higher Asia, after the death of their leader, his followers, exiled from Persia by the severe and just discipline of the primitive church, fled in increasing multitudes, and soon made numerous and zealous proselytes among a people easily dazzled with a false glare, and already half infected with the Magian devotion. If the attractive splendor of the Manichæan superstition, added to the affected sanctity, and severe penances of its votaries, could, for a time, delude, as we know it did, even so great and penetrating a genius as Augustine, what must its effects have been upon less cultivated and discriminating minds? To the Persian followers of Manes Christ became the *mediatorial Mithras:* and by the Indian disciples of that impostor he was venerated as the *preserver Veeshnu*, of which character, after all, Salivahana is only a variety.

In the history of Salivahana there is, also, another circumstance that calls for consideration. The public life of this half-deified personage, who, we have seen, early became a *Muni*, and retired to desert solitudes, was of too short a duration for us to find many parallel passages to that life in the spurious gospels; but there are a few passages that bear so decided a similitude to certain facts related of him, as absolutely to forbid our referring the resemblance to chance alone. We have already noticed those

parts that have so marked a reference to the genuine gospels, to which may be added the following undoubted imitation of *Christ disputing in the temple with the Jewish doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.* Luke ii. 46.

"There was a certain rich Indian merchant who, before he died, gave to every one of his four sons an earthen pot, sealed, with injunctions not to open it till after his decease. When opened, the first was found to contain nothing but earth; the second, coals, the third, bones, and the fourth, bran. VICRAMADITYA was applied to for an explanation; but neither he nor any body else could explain this enigma. The four sons went afterwards to *Pratishtana*, and neither the king, nor any body else there, could give them an answer; but *there was a wonderful child who did.*" The story then goes on to relate the birth, &c. of this child, and other circumstances mentioned before. "The child (SALIVAHANA) hearing of this strange case, went to the king's presence, where the four sons of the merchant were, with a *numerous and respectable assembly*. He spake *without embarassment, and they were astonished*, for his words were like *amrit*, or *ambrosia*. The first pot, says he, containing earth, entitles the owner to the landed property of his father. The second contains coals, and of course all the timber and wood become the property of the second son. The third is entitled to the elephants, horses, cattle, and animals of all descriptions be-

longing to the estate; and the fourth is entitled to the corn and grain of all kinds, the property of his father. VICRAMADITYA, on hearing this, sent for the child, who refused to come: "Go," says he, "to the messenger, and tell him, that when I have completed my business, (or in other words, when *I shall be perfected*, or *my time is arrived*), he will come to me of himself. VICRAMADITYA, irritated at this answer, wanted to kill him; and advanced, at the head of a numerous army against the child, who making *figures of soldiers with clay*, animated them."

With respect to these figures of clay, which Salivahana animates with life, the whole story is a direct and palpable forgery, only substituting *men* for *quadrupeds*, of that part of the Evangelium Infantiæ where Jesus, then only seven years old, being at play with other youths about his own age, "Varias EX LUTO formas fingebat, asinos, boves, volucres, et alia his similia. Tunc Dominus Jesus dicebat pueris, ego illis, quas feci, figuris præcipiam, ut incedant; eademque hora subsiliebant, et cum reverti illis juberet, revertebantur. Fecerat autem avium passerumque figuras, quæ cum volare ipsas juberet, volabant," &c. Jesus *formed of clay* various figures of asses, oxen, birds, and other animals. Then said Jesus, I will command these figures, which I have made, to walk, and instantly they began to move; and when he commanded them to return, they returned. He also made figures of

birds and sparrows, which when he commanded them to fly, they obeyed, and when he commanded them to stand still, they did so. cap. 36.*

In regard to the epithet of Takshaca, *carpenter*, a word not greatly dissimilar from the Greek τεκτων, occurring so repeatedly in the history of Salivahana, that repetition is, also, copied from the apocryphal gospel, since it is no where asserted in Scripture that Christ worked at the trade of his nominal father, and he is there generally denominated ο τυ τεκτονος υιος, *the son of the carpenter.* The Gospel in question, however, expressly says that Joseph took his son with him whithersoever he was sent for to work, ut portas ipsis, aut mulctralia, aut cribra, aut arcas conficeret; to construct gates, or milk-pails, or sieves, or boxes; quotiescunque ergo Josepho aliquid operis sui, longius aut brevius, latius sive angustius faciendum esset, Dominus Jesus manum suam versus illud extendebat, ac statim, prout vellet Josephus, res succedebat, ita ut opus non esset ipsi manu sua perficere, quia nec admodum peritus erat artis fabrilis; " as often as Joseph had any thing in the course of his profession to make longer, or shorter, or wider, or narrower, Jesus would extend his hand towards it, and it presently became as Joseph desired; so that he had no need to finish any thing

* I have translated this and a subsequent extract from the "Evangelium Infantiæ" for the benefit of that order of readers who may not be conversant with the classical languages.

with his own hand, for indeed he was not very skilful at the trade of a carpenter." cap. 38.

In the chapter immediately succeeding, we find an idle story inserted concerning a throne, which Joseph had orders to construct for the king of Jerusalem, which took him up two years in making, and, after all, it was made too little for the place in which it was to be erected; but by the exertion of Jesus, He pulling the throne on one side and Joseph on the other, it soon became of a proper breadth. cap. 39. I am almost ashamed to transcribe these puerilities, but they are absolutely necessary to the purpose of this investigation, which is to detect fraud and imposture in affairs the most solemn and sacred, and that purpose, it is hoped, is, by this time, and through the exposition of these facts, without diving deeper into this execrable trash, abundantly answered.

After all, should it be thought, that neither by the travels in India of St. Thomas, and other zealous disciples in the early centuries after Christ, nor by means of the extensive commercial intercourse at that time carried on between India and the great capitals of Asia, nor by MANES and his disciples, the Christian doctrines could be so *early* or so widely propagated in that country as above contended for, and my hypothesis seems to require, there yet remains another and abundant, though a later source, whence the most extended information

relative to the doctrines of Christianity could have been obtained by the brahmins, and that is the wide diffusion on its shores of the Nestorian heresy in the fifth and sixth centuries. Though introduced at a later period, still it was in full time for the brahmins to obtain the necessary intelligence, if Mr. Wilford's assertion, that all the *puranas are of a date far posterior to the Christian æra*, be founded in fact. The peculiar tenets inculcated by the author of that heresy, concerning the mixture of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, were so extremely favourable to the ancient prevailing doctrine of *incarnations*, from which doctrine the first conception of the *avatars* of their gods emanated, that we cannot be surprized at their having strongly attracted the notice, and secured the belief of vast numbers of its inhabitants. The *manner* of their being blended in that divine person, which, according to Nestorius, was by a *confused mixture* of the two natures, whereas the orthodox doctrine teaches only their close and intimate union with each other, without their being *mixed* and *confounded together*, was a point beyond their ability or inclination to investigate; it was sufficient for them that the divine and human power *were* blended in those *avatars*, and manifested in their more than mortal exploits.

Over how wide an extent of country, indeed, and in what amazing numbers the disciples of Nestorius in India were scattered in the sixth century,

may be collected from the account of Cosmas Indicopleustes, who, as a merchant of Alexandria, so frequently visited India in that century. He states, that in Malabar, particularly, there was an established ecclesiastical government, with a regular bishop at its head, and a train of subordinate priests and deacons to attend the other churches in that district, all subject to the metropolitan bishop of Seleucia in Persia.*

It will be remembered also that, according to Procopius, in this very century, the breed of silk-worms, and a knowledge of that valuable manufacture, were, under the auspices of Justinian, first brought to Constantinople by two *Christian monks*, who are expressly said to have been *missionaries in India*, and to have travelled thence to China, where they learned the art.†

The ancient accounts of India and China, by two Mahommedan travellers in the ninth century, published by Renaudot, fully confirm all the above particulars with respect to the extent and power of the Nestorian church in India; and during these nine centuries, sooner or later, doubtless it was that the artifice of the fraudful brahmin was at work in decorating his gods and heroes with borrowed splendours, sacrilegiously stolen from the Christian altars, and in fabricating from the genuine and spurious gospels,

* See Cosm. Indicopleust. in topograph. Christian. lib. iii, p. 78.

† Procopius, lib. iv. cap. 17.

the fictitious history of Salivahana. In fact, that this very Evangelium Infantiæ was perfectly well known among the Nestorians of Malabar, is proved by this circumstance recorded in Fabricius, that "at the synod holden at Diamper, by Alexius de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, in the diocese of Angamala, A. D. 1559, it was condemned by name as a book abounding with blasphemies and heresies," and it is there expressly affirmed to have been read in their churches.‡

Were it necessary to my purpose to descend to ages later in time, and trace the wide extended influence of the Nestorian faith through Asia, and in particular in China, Tartary, Tibet, and other countries situated on the confines of India, authorities would not be wanting, but may abundantly be found in the pages of the above cited authors, Mosheim, Fabricius, and others. I shall not, however, at present, travel beyond those confines. During the sanguinary conflicts and wide desolation of succeeding centuries, occasioned by the irruption of Arabian, Persian, and Tartar conquerors, the Nestorian church seems to have flourished with unimpaired vigour in the remote region of Malabar; and a more striking proof of it cannot be given than is to be found in the authentic fact, that when the Portugueze arrived in India, they found, to

† See an express Dissertation of Renaudot on the subject, annexed to these ancient accounts, p. 67.

‡ See Cod. Apoc. tom. 3, p. 421.

their astonishment, no less than one hundred Christian churches on that coast, whose repose and union, however, they basely violated, on account, as they averred, of the heretical doctrines professed by them, though, in fact, avarice and ambition were the real principles that incited their persecution. In spite, however, of all their fanatic rage, combined with the terrors of the bloody inquisition established by them at Goa, we are informed by Dr. Buchanan, who furnishes us with the preceding fact, that, even at this day, there remain in Malabar fifty-five churches of that creed, and a body of not less than fifty thousand Christians.‡

Such, my Lords, were the various *sources*, such the *numerous*, or rather *innumerable*, channels by which the knowledge of the sacred books, the Hebrew, not less than the evangelical writings, might, during a long succession of ages, have reached the shores of India. In the latter portion of these Letters, I have dwelt too much, perhaps, on those of a more modern date, but the subject recently discussed required it; as the history of Salivahana ascends not beyond the æra of Christianity. But the race of men with whose sacred dogmas those of Christianity have so intimate, so inseparable a connection, the JEWS, were too wonderful a nation, both in their history and manners, were too centrally situated in Asia, and kept up too extended a commerce with their neighbours, not to be the subject

§ See Buchanan's Memoir, p. 51 and 59.

of frequent and profound consideration to the oriental, and even the early Greek philosophers. The Mosaic doctrines, as is proved by Archbishop Usher and Stanley,* were well known to Pythagoras, who has inserted many of them in his philosophy; and with respect to Plato's knowledge of them, I hope I may be pardoned for introducing here what I have said concerning him on this very subject in the "Indian Antiquities," when tracing the vestigia of those doctrines through the schools of Greece.* "The best evidence of the fact is to be found in his writings, where are to be met with such repeated allusions to what he denominates παλαιοι λογοι, ancient discourses, or traditions, and certain Συριοι και Φοινικοι μυθοι, or Syrian and Phœnician fables, that it is impossible to consider this philosopher as not conversant in Hebrew antiquities. The contrary, in fact, was so manifest to Numenius, a Pythagorean philosopher of the second century, that, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, he exclaimed, Τι γαρ ἐϛι Πλατων ἠ Μωσης Ἀττικιζων; What is Plato but Moses conversing in the language of Athens ?†

And could the curious though remote race of Indian brahmins, whom Pythagoras is known to have visited, and from whom he borrowed the singular doctrine of the metempsychosis, all this

* Usserii Annal, p. 151, and Stanley, p. 350.

† Indian Antiq. vol. v. p. 443.

‡ Clem. Alexand. Stromat. lib. i. p. 411, edit. Oxon.

while have remained in ignorance of the doctrines and philosophy of Moses? The voice of History, and the decisive evidence of their own writings, in many points so congenial with the Mosaic philosophy and legislative code, absolutely forbid the supposition. Let it ever be remembered, when subjects are brought forward, *and many more may be expected*, similar to those which have been above discussed, that the knowledge of the Hebrew writings and history could not fail of being widely propagated through Asia, owing to the dreadful calamities which, in consequence of their perverseness and disobedience of God's commands, in different æras, befell that unhappy nation. Among others, *primarily*, may be noticed the captivity and dispersion of the TEN TRIBES through Assyria and Media, by Salmanasar, in the remote year, before Christ, 721; and, *secondly*, and, more particularly, the grand catastrophe that befell them in the year, before the same æra, 586, when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, its temple and its palaces plundered and burned, and the remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin carried away captive to Babylon.

It was then, principally, that, grown impatient under the chains of bondage, during that long ordained captivity of *seventy* years, they migrated, in multitudes, to various regions of the Higher Asia, Persia, Bactria, and INDIA (to the last country more particularly), of which fact recent researches

made on the spot have obtained for us the most positive evidence, carrying with them their ancient and venerable books, which contained the remarkable predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah, concerning the promised Messiah, to whom their whole symbolical ritual alluded. Among these, supremely eminent in grandeur and majesty, exulting piety enumerates that most solemn and sublime prediction, uttered by the former of those prophets, and so pointedly alluded to in a former page—that A CHILD SHOULD BE BORN OF A VIRGIN, AND THAT HIS NAME SHOULD BE WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE. On the basis of this, and still more ancient predictions, the history both of Crishna and Salivahana were, *in part*, founded, *in part*, I say, because I trust in the preceding pages, it has been in my power to prove, that the portrait, thus commenced in ancient periods, was eventually *finished* with borrowed images from the gospels, both genuine and apocryphal, which, through the channels above pointed out, in the early ages of Christianity found their way to the recesses of the brahmins.

Thus, my Lords, have I endeavoured, dispassionately, to investigate a subject of great importance to our national religion, and to annihilate one source of imaginary triumph to its enemies of the schools of Voltaire and Volney. On this, as on

former occasions, however deficient in ability, I trust the praise of assiduity, at least, will not be denied me; and that the errors of judgment, wheresoever they may have occurred, will be overlooked in the uprightness of intention.

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest deference and respect,

My Lords,

&c. &c. &c.

THOMAS MAURICE.

IN THE PRESS,

And speedily, by Subscription, will be published,

PRICE ONE GUINEA,

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE ENGRAVINGS,

WESTMINSTER ABBEY;

AN ELEGIAC AND HISTORICAL POEM.

CONDITIONS.

I. WESTMINSTER ABBEY will be printed at the Shakspeare Press, and was intended to have been executed in the same type, and in the same costly manner as RICHMOND HILL; but the expence was found to be too great for the price, and it will therefore be printed in Bulmer's best manner on ROYAL OCTAVO.

II. Subscriptions will be received by WILLIAM MILLER, in Albemarle-street; by WHITE, COCHRANE and Co. in Fleet-street; and rhe Author, at the British Museum.

ARGUMENT.

CANTO I.

THE Poem opens with reflections suitable to the grandeur and solemnity of the subject.—High antiquity of the structure—the most venerable remain of Gothic Architecture in England—sublimely eminent amid the wrecks of time, and the revolution of empires.—Rapid sketch of its ancient grandeur at the period when the Roman Catholic religion flourished in its meridian splendor.—Shrine of EDWARD the Confessor—its immense wealth.—HENRY the Seventh's chapel.—EDWARD the First.—Houses of YORK and LANCASTER, with their rival roses, slumber undistinguished in this house of death.—Vanity of Ambition — PITT — FOX.—Vanity of Genius and Science—DRYDEN—HANDEL—MURRAY—MEAD—CASAUBON—Ancient times of Chivalry—the Crusaders—the feudal Barons—Personal combats of ancient warriors—PERCY and DOUGLAS.—Fondness of our ancestors for armorial bearings, richly blazoned—massy shields and spears—statues in brass—statues in marble.——Distinguished females—Queen ELIZABETH—MARY Queen of Scots—Queen ANNE—Dutchess of Somerset—PERCY, Dutchess of Northumberland.

CANTO II.

The First Canto having been, for the most part, engaged in general views of the subject, and in discussing the higher order of events—thrones subverted—dynasties extinguished—sanguinary contests between nations and illustrious individuals—the Second Canto presents to the Reader's attention, scenes and characters of a more pacific kind, and is more particular in its details.—The objects and persons noticed, however, lie so widely scattered through that vast dormitory of death, that no regular connected survey of them could be given.—A rapid summary is exhibited of British statesmen—patriots—divines—philosophers—artists—and poets—deposited in its chapels and cloisters. — Among those enumerated are—Howard—Russel—Sidney—Chatham—Newton—Camden—Samuel Johnson--Sprat—Barrow—South--Pearse—Kneller—Rubiliac—Bacon—Chaucer—Spenser—Ben. Johnson — Shakspeare—Milton — Cowley — Butler — Dryden—Gray—Solemn apostrophe to their departed Spirits—the subversion of the Fabric at the sound of the last trumpet—the resurrection of the glorious dead to happiness and immortality.

Among the few Subscribers yet obtained, are

The Earl of Carysfort	-	10 Copies.
Marquis of Buckingham		
Lord Grenville		
Hon. Mr. Grenville		
Earl Fortescue		
Earl of Upper Ossory		
Duke of Marlborough	-	5
Late Earl of Dartmouth	-	5
Viscount Sidmouth		
Earl of Bessborough		
Lady Calthorpe		
John Penn, Esq.	-	5
Thomas Hope, Esq.	-	5
The late Henry Hope, Esq.		
Mrs. Goddard		
Lady Pole		
Lady Watson	-	2
Rev. Dr. Buchanan		
John Vincent Gandolfi, Esq.		
Henry Alexander, Esq.		
Thomas Nash, Esq.		
Rev. Mr. Cranmer.		
James Wyatt, Esq.		
George Wyatt, Esq.		

London: Printed by W. Bulmer and Co.
Cleveland-row, St. James's.